

HALESOWEN CHRONICLE



Thursday, February 13, 2014

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Flooding misery is due to a burst pipe

A BURST main sent water shooting more than 40ft into the air, flooding a road and parts of homes.

Water cascaded into the street at the junction of Hagley Road and Rosemary Road, Halesowen, after the six inch-wide pipe burst. Some properties briefly lost their water supply and the gushing pipe caused problems for motorists. Water flooded properties, including a garage.

One homeowner said her washing machine, tumble drier and fridge freezer were damaged by the burst at 9am on Tuesday. Sandbags were placed at the top of driveways at two properties. A resident, who did not wish to be named, said: "My garage has been flooded out. Everyone who helped have been brilliant."

The water was up to four inches high in the side street off the main Hagley Road at one point.

Ward councillor Ken Turner called on Dudley Council to ensure drains were cleared. But Dudley highways chief Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said: "The flooding issue at the junction of Hagley Road and Rosemary Road was caused primarily by the fact that a major water main had burst, which was clearly apparent as we received reports that water was shooting up in the air."

Call for beer duty freeze

BREWERY bosses in the Black Country have called on the Government to freeze or cut beer duty in the Budget.

Brewers have said the economic importance of the industry means it is worthy of a tax freeze.

Managing director at Wolverhampton's Marstons, Richard Westwood, has called for a freeze in beer duty, while Alan Preece, from Green Duck Brewery in Stourbridge, said he would like them to go one step further and see it cut for the second year running.

CRIME ALERT ON CAR CATS

OFFICERS are cracking down on crooks who are targeting vehicles for expensive exhaust parts leaving motorists stranded.

More than 70 catalytic converters have been reported as stolen to Dudley Police, between April and December 2013 with thieves targeting a variety of vehicles.

These have included Mercedes Sprinter vans, Kia, Mitsubishi, Ford, Peugeot, Citroen and Hyundai vehicles being targeted.

Precious

Once stolen, the thieves are then selling the converters, which contain precious metals as scrap, while the victims are left stranded and facing a costly repair bill.

In a bid to track the culprits, police are coating the costly converters with a special liquid that links them to the car or van they are fitted to.

Sergeant Corrina Griffiths, from Dudley police station, has organised the initiative codenamed Operation Boscat.

She said: "Between April and December 2013 we've seen a rise in vehicle crime across Dudley with catalytic converters also being stolen.

"We're working hard to target these cat crooks and this operation is just one element of a broad range of tactics we're currently employing."

"The special fluid allows us to check converters that we find on our routine visits to scrap dealers against crime reports. With all of their customers having to produce photo ID, we can then trace the person who cashed it in."

People wanting to take advantage of the scheme should email their name address and phone number on: op_boscat@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

Report by
Tom Mason

hicle and owner details on a register which can be accessed by police at any time.

Security experts also urge drivers not to park their cars with two wheels on the kerb as this can give the thieves easier access to the engine compartment.

The project is being funded by Safe & Sound, Dudley's Community Safety Partnership.

"It's important that all motorists and businesses who own high-clearance vehicles, like 4x4s or vans, are aware of how best to protect themselves as these are easier for criminals to crawl under," added Sgt Griffiths.

"We are also actively encouraging vehicle owners to get their catalytic converters security marked by taking advantage of our scheme."

"There are a limited number of the marking kits so we are working on a first come first basis."

People who sign up to the scheme will then be referred to one of our garages who will mark the converter, free of charge on a time and date to suit the driver.

People wanting to take advantage of the scheme should email their name address and phone number on: op_boscat@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

Heartless thieves steal pensioners' TV



Residents Mary Attwood, Ray Box and Tony Pearson, with scheme manager Jo Milner, at Woodhouse Court, Quarry Bank

HEARTLESS thieves broke into a sheltered housing complex and stole a plasma television only purchased by bosses six months ago.

Elderly people living at Woodhouse Court, Sheffield Street, Quarry Bank, have been left devastated following the overnight raid.

Home manager Jo Milner had spent two years asking Dudley Council for the £1,495 television, but now believes it could be a year before it is replaced.

She said: "The loss of the television is bad enough for the residents but to think someone has broken in here during the night is awful. One could have even come outside in the night

and bumped into these people. It's not worth thinking about what could have happened."

The Panasonic 55 inch television, which had a 3D viewing option, is worth £1,495.

Upset

Miss Milner added: "The residents are obviously upset to see the television gone. It was something they could gather round and socialise while watching. Everyone is disappointed."

The burglary took place overnight on January 29. Cleaner Ray Payne discovered the television had gone when

he entered the communal room in the morning. He also found a window open and a crowbar on the floor.

Resident Mary Attwood, 80, said: "I just think it is terrible to think someone has broken in here while we were all asleep to take our television. People are upset and wondering who could do a thing like that. I hope they know they have deprived a lot of residents here of pleasure."

Carl Gibson has lived at the complex for nine years. He said: "I'm just surprised someone would target a place for the elderly."

Anyone with information should call Dudley Police on 101.

Mosque incident accused in court

SIX teenagers will stand trial over a series of racially-aggravated offences and criminal damage to a car near a mosque after they all denied the charges against them.

The six boys, aged from 14 to 17, are accused of a total of 18 charges after worshippers at Bradley Heath Central Mosque in Plant Street were allegedly targeted in October last year.

A 17-year-old is charged with three counts of racially-aggravated assault between October 16 and 24.

Damage

He is also charged with causing criminal damage to a vehicle on October 21.

Two 16-year-olds and a 15-year-old are facing charges of racially-aggravated assault and harassment and criminal damage to the same vehicle.

Another 15-year-old has been charged with solely criminal damage and a 14-year-old has been charged with racially-aggravated harassment.

Each member of the group of youths pleaded not guilty to each of the charges put before them at Sandwell Magistrate Court on Monday.

The teenagers will stand trial at the court in Oldbury on April 29.

Man dies in blaze horror

A MAN who died in a fire he started at his home on Saturday has been named as Brian Franklin.

Police continue investigations into the arson attack in Wood Street, Dudley, from which Mr Franklin's wife and two children, aged nine and 15, escaped.

The 42-year-old mechanic, who was seen by neighbours dousing petrol over his partner, died at the scene. Police have described his death as 'unexplained'. Reports of gunshots are being investigated.

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HALESOWEN CHRONICLE

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Knife amnesty scheme to be extended

POLICE bosses have said plans to introduce a knife amnesty scheme in Birmingham is only the start of something bigger for the West Midlands.

Three new knife surrender bins will be introduced in and around Birmingham in the coming weeks, allowing people to hand in a variety of bladed items, as West Midlands Police continue their crackdown on crimes involving a knife.

Bob Jones, Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands, who is helping lead the scheme, said: "In the past people have thought that the word amnesty meant that they wouldn't be prosecuted if the item they handed in was connected to a serious crime. This isn't the case which is why we have relabelled them surrender bins."

"We have had hundreds of knives

of all shapes and sizes handed into us in the past, from everyday cutlery to machetes. These types of dangerous weapons are the ones we most want to take off the street."

Mr Jones said the force were already in talks with a group in Wolverhampton to establish a similar drop box there and added that he was committed to seeing more bins introduced across the Black Country.

The new campaign comes after a series of attacks with knives in the West Midlands in recent months, including the stabbing of 16-year-old Leasowes High School student Christina Edkins, who was killed on a bus in March last year by Phillip Simelane.

Following a hearing at Birmingham Crown Court, the 23-year-old from Walsall was detained indefinitely under the Mental Health Act.

Relief as OAP bus subsidy is saved

PENSIONERS and campaigners have spoken of their relief after subsidised tram and train travel was spared the axe but they will continue to lobby over Ring and Ride services.

This is despite a partial climbdown by transport bosses over their proposed cuts. Centro has announced that free tram and train travel for pensioners and disabled people is to be spared the axe despite drastic funding cuts.

U-turn

The West Midlands transport authority is also preparing to make a U-turn on proposals to increase half-price children's bus fares to two-thirds.

Councillors on Centro are set to meet this week and will then vote on a budget which will see £7 million cut over the coming year.

Ring and Ride will still lose most of its Sunday services while the 60p fee for the service will be increased from £1 from April.

The organisation had considered scrapping its funding for Ring and Ride, which could have saved £10m, but has instead proposed reducing its funding to £8.5m.

Robber pair got no cash

POLICE are appealing for witnesses after three raiders armed with an axe on February 6 attempted to rob a cash security guard outside a high street bank in Dudley.

Police were called at 10.15am to Barclays Bank of the corner of High Street and Union Street.

The offenders attempted to grab two boxes from the G4S security guard but fled with nothing. One box was held onto by the guard while the other was dropped. The white getaway van was later found abandoned.

Call CID at Harborne on 101.

Woman cut free

A WOMAN was cut free by firefighters and taken to hospital with a suspected spinal injury following a two-car crash in Dudley.

Dudley and Brierley Hill crews were called to the junction of Cook Avenue and A5140 at around 9.30am on February 5.

Boy died when 'plea for help' went wrong

A 12-year-old boy died after trying to hang himself as a 'plea for help'.

Cameron Turnbull had not settled after moving to Westminster School in Rowley Regis.

The youngster died in Birmingham Children's Hospital from heart failure and respiratory distress on January 4 last year after his mother found him hanging on New Year's Eve 2012 at their home in Ivyhouse Road, Oldbury.

Senior Coroner Robin Balmain concluded that it was an accidental death because there was no evidence that Cameron intended to kill himself. "It seems to me this was some sort of plea for help," said Mr Balmain.

Michelle Turnbull, 40, said her son, who had attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, died 12 days before his 13th birthday.

He had enjoyed his residential special school, Shenstone Lodge, Lichfield. When he reached secondary school age, he moved to Westminster School for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. "It was a terrible experience," she told the inquest. He struggled to learn, started doing "naughty" things to get out of class and had not been able to read or write when he died.

Sandwell Council children's services boss Councillor Simon Hackett, said: "Our thoughts and sympathies are with Cameron's family and friends." Councillor Lowe said: "Due to the significant cuts in government funding that have been imposed on us we are having to make extremely difficult decisions in relation to making millions of pounds worth of savings."

"All things considered, we do not want to hit the hard working people of the Dudley borough any more during these difficult financial times, so are proposing to freeze council tax levels."

Club hope for a knockout night



Chairman Paul Gough, left, with Matt Ward, Mayor Alan Finch, Ian Brough and MP Ian Austin. A FULL house is expected for a fundraising boxing event where young amateur fighters will go glove-to-glove to help Priory Park Boxing Club at The Copthorne Hotel in Merry Hill, Brierley Hill.

The event on February 22 and will raise cash to help the club buy new equipment for its expanding base in Priory Road in Dudley.

Backing the event is Dudley North MP Ian Austin, Dudley Mayor Councillor Alan

Finch and businessman Roy Richardson. Paul Gough, head coach at the boxing club, said: "It's fantastic to have so much support and we hope the event will deliver a great night for everyone."

"We always need money to help us going and provide the children with the training they get, so events like this are vital."

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24-hour urgent care base welcomed

DUDLEY'S health boss has welcomed plans for an urgent care centre at Russells Hall Hospital, saying it will offer an improved service. Councillor Stuart Turner is pleased that under the proposals by Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), it would be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The urgent care facility, alongside the accident and emergency department, would replace the walk-in centre at Holly Hall.

Dudley CCG chief officer Paul Maubach said the proposals, drawn up after public consultation, offered the best option. There had been concerns about access and extra pressure on A&E but he told the board that transport links to the hospital were better than to the walk-in centre and urgent care would help to reduce demand for A&E.

Councillor Turner said: "I went into this process wanting to make sure the people of Dudley would not be in a worse situation. Dudley CCG has listened to concerns and come back with this improved 24 hour service."

But he wanted assurances that there would always be a GP on hand to see patients.

Petition on danger bend

DUDLEY Council has announced it will look at speed reduction measures and road markings after more than 500 people signed a petition calling for action over a 'dangerous bend' in Upper Gornal.

Concerns have been raised following crashes and near misses on the bend where Church Street and Temple Street meet. There have been reports of cars hitting the old stone wall outside St Peter and the English Martyrs Church as often as once a week.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin helped launch the petition.

Crowd at funeral

THERE was standing room only as around 150 turned out to pay their respects to Black Country community stalwart Jim Hill at the chapel at Gornal Wood Crematorium. Mrs Hill, wife of former Black Country Society chairman Stan Hill, died aged 82 following an illness.

Biker, 19, loses life in high speed crash



Tragedy — Thomas Oakes

HE enjoyed off road scrambling and quad biking while he was growing up, and had just got a new motorbike. But teenager Thomas Oakes' passion for bikes led to tragedy when he lost his life in a high speed crash.

The 19-year-old was killed when he came off his Yamaha 125cc bike and suffered severe head injuries. He had been riding back to drop his bike back to his home in Halesowen before taking his mother Jenny out for the evening.

But Mr Oakes hit speeds of be-

tween 61 mph and 73 mph — more than double the speed limit — as he travelled down a steep section of Coombs Road, Halesowen, at around 6.40pm on August 24. He lost control and he skidded off the road at the junction of Amber Way mounting a curb and a grass verge.

A police road traffic crash investigator told Mr Oakes' inquest that his helmet was incorrectly fastened and came off in the crash. The helmet was found nearby.

Black Country senior coroner Robin Balmain called Mr Oakes'

death a tragedy as he concluded the inquest this week.

He said the teenager's relative inexperience as a rider on the road and the high speed of the accident contributed to his death.

The inquest heard the rear wheel of the Yamaha bike had a slow puncture.

Mr Oakes had passed his compulsory basic training bike test, Smethwick Coroner's Court heard.

Police crash scene investigator PC Chris Clarke said Mr Oakes' failed to negotiate the right hand turn in

the road and entered a filter lane at the junction.

"On approach to the collision site the motorcycle was doing a speed which was twice the speed limit of 30mph," said the officer. "If he had been travelling at 30 mph in the filter lane he would have been able to stop."

Mr Balmain said the cause of death was severe head injuries as a result of a road traffic collision. He added: "I'm afraid there is clear evidence from the CCTV that shows that he was going far too fast."

NEWS in brief

Trust consider golden greetings

GOLDEN hellos could be offered to entice recruits to a hospital trust, as bosses look at reducing other staff to make £40.5 million savings.

Chiefs at Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust say they are having problems recruiting for key posts despite recruitment drives. Various 'incentive schemes' are now being considered.

It comes as bosses are planning £20.6m savings in the year from April and £19.9 in the year after.

£300k pay and display scheme

AROUND £300,000 of council cash may be spent replacing dozens of pay and display machines at car parks across Dudley.

A total of 52 machines, many of which were first installed in 1993, could be upgraded under the proposals being discussed by members of Dudley Council's cabinet yesterday.

It comes after the authority revealed plans to increase parking charges across the borough as part of its budget proposals to meet a £60million shortfall over the next three years.

Credit union is popular online

THE number signing up to a credit union has soared by almost 150 per cent during January.

The Dudley-Council backed Castle & Crystal Credit Union was the first in the Black Country to offer members a full online service. The new website was launched last month and since then over 105 new members have signed up online.

Stolen classic car still missing

A CLASSIC car stolen from the driveway of a Dudley home is yet to be found.

Brenda and Howard Parker are appealing for people to look out for their Ford Escort Mk1 after it was taken from their gated drive as they slept on January 24. The car is worth £5,000 and was the pride and joy of the couple, who live in Cedar Road.

Suspect arrested

A WOMAN from Quinton has been arrested by officers investigating an attack on a Birmingham bus passenger, who was assaulted after asking a couple to stop their children throwing sweets.

£200m plans for new and improved council housing

AROUND £206million will be ploughed into improving thousands of council homes in Dudley over the next five years.

Some of the cash will also be spent on building more than 100 new properties across the borough.

It comes as bosses propose a rent increase for council tenants of 1.5 per cent, or an average of £1.22 a week from April.

Man who sold drugs given 100 hours work

A 23-year-old man has been ordered to carry out unpaid work after police found more than £3,000 worth of drugs at his home. Aaron Collins, of Harrison Court, Hawbush, admitted one count of possession with intent to sell cannabis and possession of mephedrone.

Police also found a CS gas canister in his house.

Mr Robert Convey, prosecuting, said police found plants that could yield 220g of cannabis. He said: "This would have a potential street value of £2,600. Police also found 638g of mephedrone which is worth £490.

He said he had bought the CS canister from a man in a pub. He would sell the cannabis but it was to a small circle of friends."

Mr Ekwu Tiwana, for Collins, said: "He has been rather silly because he had accrued a large debt and needed to pay it off."

Judge Michael Challinor told Collins he had to carry out a 12 month community order and 100 hours unpaid work. He was also told to pay costs of £535.

The rise is lower than last year's increase of 4.6 per cent and council bosses said they wanted to keep it small to reduce the pressure on cash-strapped families.

Councillor Steve Walther, cabinet member for housing, said: "In previous years the council followed the government's formula for setting rents in order to bring council rents in line with other social housing rents, to allow for inflation and to ensure we could afford to deliver our housing service.

Struggling

"We now have greater flexibility when setting our rent increases and remain committed to helping people across the borough who may be struggling with increased food prices and utility costs.

"By proposing to keep our rent increase to a minimum this year, we hope to ease the financial pressures some of our tenants may face."

"We have carefully considered the lowest rent rise we can afford, while making sure that we have enough resources to continue maintaining the housing stock and making improvements to our properties. This rent rise is also lower than most other authorities in the local area."

The council is proposing to spend £13.4m to build more council homes. Two schemes for 17 homes in Sedgley and Wollaston are already under way.

Eldest of the trio is Lillian Webber, known to family and friends as Lilly, who marked her 95th birthday at the same day.

It was one big party for Lillian Webber, Patricia Harper and Janet Parker who celebrated their collective milestones at Abele View care home, in Ivorley, near Stourbridge.

Trio celebrate with big birthday party



THEY are three of kind clocking up 248 years between them and sharing their birthday celebrations on the same day.

It was a big party for Lillian Webber, Patricia Harper and Janet Parker who celebrated their collective milestones at Abele View care home, in Ivorley, near Stourbridge.

Staff pulled out all the stops to arrange a day of fun for the birthday girls and invited their friends and families.

Joining in the celebrations was Patricia Harper celebrated her 77th birthday. She moved into Abele View last August.

Mrs Harper was born and bred in Stourbridge and married husband Patrick in 1961 and has two sons, Ian and Keith.

Lilly is the youngest of nine children and was brought up in Smethwick. She married Archie in 1938 and had five generations of her family at the birthday celebrations. Her elder sister Elsie will be 100 in April.

Joining in the celebrations was Patricia Harper celebrated her 77th birthday. She moved into Abele View last August.

The retired care assistant was joined by family members including her daughter Claire Cornell.

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NEWS

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



GREG Barker, the energy minister, says middle-aged people should buy solar panels because they are a better investment than a pension. Well, that depends. In these stormy times, I can pretty well guarantee that the thing that has just flown off your roof, and landed with an expensive crash in your garden, is not your pension.

□□□□□□□□

CIVIL engineering is a big, bold, blokey profession, railways are romantic and Cornwall is steeped in lore and music. In the good old days, repairing the storm-wrecked railway line at Dawlish would have taken years and generated enough folk songs to fuel a thousand pub crawl. The current estimate for this epic repair is six weeks. Such is progress. Take your finger out of your ear and put away that banjo.

□□□□□□□□

AUF wiedersehen, Aidan Burley, the Tory MP for Cannock has agreed to quit before next year's General Election. It was the only possible ending. The tragedy is that Burley showed such promise. He was Oxford-educated and a hard-working local MP. So brilliant and yet so stupid. If he had been merely on the fringes of the infamous Nazi-themed stag party in a French ski resort, as he first claimed, Burley might have survived. But when it emerged he had actually organised the party and provided the SS-style uniform, his political career was kaput. One newspaper even found an old photo of his fiancee at another fancy-dress party - with another bloke in German uniform. Burley raged that this was "gutter press personified," which is the sort of language politicians tend to use just before they clear their desks.

□□□□□□□□

EDUCATION Secretary Michael Gove says state schools should admit two-year-olds and stay open 10 hours a day. To what end? Schools already have our children for at least 12 years and yet a fifth of school leavers are illiterate, innumerate or both. When it comes to teaching time, the issue is not quantity but quality.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Probe on third 'never' event at eye centre

A PATIENT had the wrong operation carried out on their eye because they had the same surname as another patient on a hospital waiting list.

The error was the fifth so-called 'never event' to happen at Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust in the past 12 months.

Health chiefs introduced the term in 2009, to highlight cases of bad care which should be avoidable and never take place.

This 'wrong implant' event took place on January 3 at the Birmingham & Midland Eye Centre, where three of the five similar cases have occurred at the trust.

It comes after eye surgeons carried out an operation on the wrong patient less than three months ago.

In that case, on November 12, the patient responded to a different name being called in the waiting room and then followed the doctor into the procedure room.

The latest case comes despite bosses approving an external review of their safety processes to stop such things happening, at a meeting last month.

Roger Stedman, trust medical director said: "It is frustrating that we have had three never events in eye theatres in two years.

■ by Simon Stone

The analysis of each event shows that each one demonstrated errors in the process. The teams are working hard to introduce an approach in eye theatres that double checks lens selection more rigorously."

A report into the incident said it saw a lens implanted in the eye in a procedure, which can be to treat cataracts or short-sightedness.

Bosses temporarily suspended similar operations at the centre in the wake of its third never event to 'examine why lessons from previous incidents were still not preventing these errors occurring'.

The trust's board was due to hear more on the matter at a meeting.

The trust runs Sandwell Hospital in West Bromwich, City Hospital in Birmingham and Rowley Regis Hospital.

Teenager helps seize guns



Warrior driver Private Callum Noone, aged 19

SOLDIERS from the Black Country and Staffordshire chased across the desert to seize guns, ammunition and drugs from an Afghan rebel.

With a 19-year-old from Rowley Regis driving one of the four Warrior armoured vehicles, they charged after an insurgent. The Quick Reaction Force from a Company of the 3rd Battalion Mercian Regiment received a tip-off that the suspect was fleeing in a tractor with trailer. They rushed 10 miles across rough ground from their base at Lashkar Gah Durai to cut off his escape route. They found an arms cache and hashish.

Private Callum Noone from Rowley Regis, who was driving one of the Warriors, said: "We were going around 20 mph across rough terrain and it was 15 or 20 minutes before we clocked him." The former pupil of Heathfields Technical College, who signed up in February 2012, continued: "He was going as quickly as he could but we boxed him in with the four Warriors. We took him back to our base under escort."

Work on Metro to affect bus services

BUS users are being reminded more than a dozen bus services will not serve parts of Birmingham city centre for two weeks as work progresses on a £127 million metro extension.

Colmore Circus in the city centre is closed until February 23 so new train tracks for the City Centre Metro extension can be laid.

The £127m extension of the Midland Metro will run from Snow Hill through Bull Street, Corporation Street, Stephenson Street and terminate outside New Street station.

Temporary

The following NX West Midlands Bus services will be unable to serve their Snow Hill Queensway bus stops — 9, 10, 22, 23, 24, 29, 29A, 83, 89, 120, 127, 128, 129, 140 & 141. Passengers will need to use the temporary bus stops on Great Charles Street/Livery Street and Colmore Row.

The NX West Midlands Bus services 82 and 83 will be unable to serve their Colmore Row or Edmund Street stops. Passengers will need to use the temporary bus stops on Priory Queenway, Snow Hill Queensway and Great Charles Street.

Construction firm Balfour Beatty, who are building the extension, expect the work to be completed in 2015.

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Offender pleased to tidy up old graves

OFFENDERS tidying up the graveyard at St Peter's Church are finding it a humbling and rewarding experience, as well as hard work.

Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Service is taking six offenders a day for three days a week to tackle the mammoth task. Helping the Cradley and District Ex-Service Association, they have so far uncovered 13 war graves, including five from the 1914-18 conflict.

And, for one offender sentenced to do unpaid work in the community, it strikes a chord. The 28-year-old man, from Dudley — who does not wish to be identified — was a soldier himself.

"I got in a bit of trouble fighting in a pub after getting back from Iraq," he said. "So I'm glad that, as part of my payback, I am doing this work. It's worthwhile. A lot of the old soldiers have gone and people of my generation need to carry on remembering them."

The ex-service group won a £9,000 grant from the Ibstock Cory Environment Trust and £105 from the Two Gates Ragged School Fund. They aim to create walks through the seven-acre graveyard for schoolchildren to commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War.

Town centre bus lanes will be axed for a trial period

BUS lanes blamed for causing major traffic congestion around a town centre will be axed under an 18 month trial agreed by councillors.

Motorists say roads are clogged around Halesowen but two bus lanes and have called for them to be axed to free up traffic jams.

by Andrew Turton

Councillor Ahmed said: "In principle we have agreed to the removal of two of the bus lanes in Halesowen for an 18 month trial period.

"During this time we will be continually assessing the impact of this on traffic in the area, and public transport access to the nearby bus station and town centre.

"We will also continue to work with Centro throughout the process to ensure bus travel remains a top priority."

The former Halesowen Area Committee voted two years to propose the closure of the bus lanes before the protracted talks caused delays.

Halesowen Councillor David Vickers today applauded the decision to axe the lanes, saying the lanes had brought disruption to the daily commute for motorists.

Remove

Dudley Council's transport boss Councillor Khurshid Ahmed has agreed to remove the lanes for a trial period to assess their impact.

The inbound lane in Queensway, near Halesowen Leisure Centre, and the outbound lane, in Bromsgrove Street, will be closed for 18 months.

Council bosses had been locked in talks with passenger transport authority Centro over the proposals after claims the lanes helped maintain bus timetables.

Signs will go up informing motorists in the next few weeks ready for the trial to begin in March.

Young dancers scoop top prizes



Dancers from the Funky Fusion School of Dance are pictured with their trophy haul

TALENTED youngsters are celebrating after scooping a host of top prizes at a dance competition.

Six girls from Funky Fusion School of Dance in the Black Country competed in the freestyle contest in Redditch. The girls came away with first prize in their categories.

Marie Timms, who runs the dance school with her friend Vicki Adams, said:

"We're so proud at how well the girls have done. It's only the third time they have competed properly. They really have improved dramatically since starting training for these competitions last year and all together have scooped around 50 trophies so far which really is something to be proud of."

The winning dancers were Jaycee Millard, Lauren Baker, Harriet Dreyer, Olivia McCarthy, Ellie Hartley and Chloe Baker. Funky Fusion School of Dance, set up three years ago, runs dance classes for youngsters in Rowley Regis, Darlaston and West Bromwich. Call Marie on 07854 903216.

Canalside pub is a listed building

AN historic Black Country pub has been granted grade II-listed status.

Staff at The Navigation, formerly The New Navigation, in Titford Road, Oldbury, are celebrating after receiving the recognition from English Heritage for the pub's connection to the 'improved' public house era of the 1930s.

The pub was designed and built in 1931 by Birmingham architect Percy Clark.

Karen Stevens, manager for owners Westbourne Leisure, said: "We are very proud of the pub and the way it is managed."

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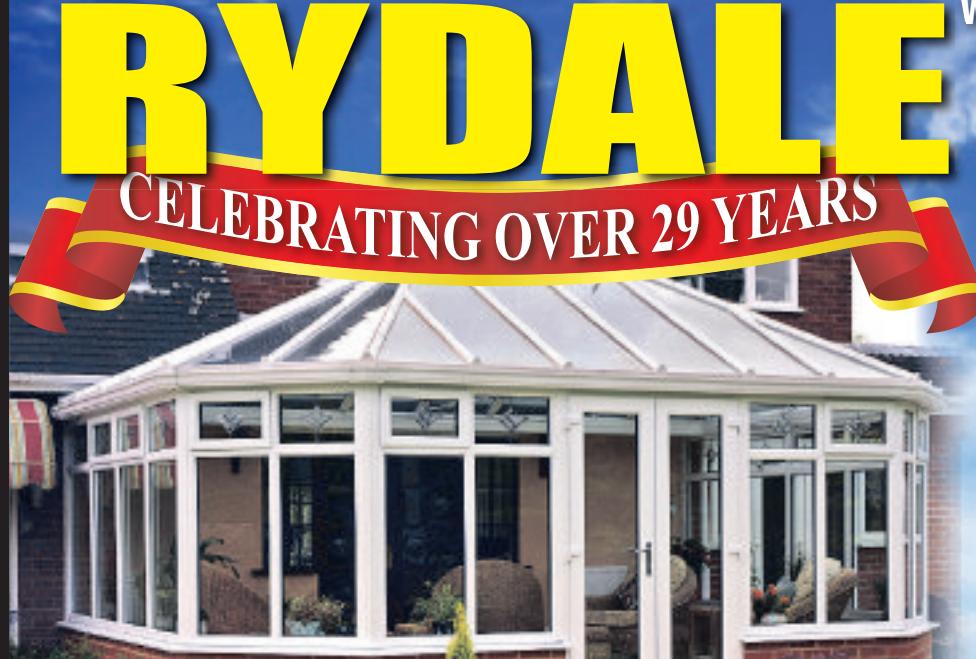
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NEWS FEATURE

IN MY VIEW

WITH
MARK
ANDREWS

At long last, the financial comparison website Go Compare has finally latched onto the fact that a novelty Welshman with a silly moustache warbling on about car insurance for years on end can eventually become a tad irritating.

The company's new ad campaign sees the tubby, annoying singer having found his true vocation in life, behind the wheel of a bus.

But you have to say, it is an interesting choice of background music.

Were they aware that The Green, Green Grass of Home is a song about a man heading for the gallows? Maybe it's just a bit of wishful thinking...

□□□

ACCORDING to Copenhagen Zoo's website, its aims are to be known 'for its ethical standards', to be 'respected for its high standards and quality regarding the keeping of animals', and 'be actively involved in the international efforts to preserve animal species'.

This is the same zoo which at the weekend shot a healthy young giraffe rather than see it transferred to another zoo, and then chopped it up in front of an audience of schoolchildren, before feeding it to the lions.

But while the Danish definition of ethical treatment of zoo animals might be a little different to ours, it is good to know that there are some moral codes which are rigidly adhered to.

For example, it is a criminal offence to eat raw bacon in the event of a full moon. And saying that your wife is uglier than her mother carries a 12-month prison sentence.

So let's get this right.

An undercooked bacon buttie or a bit of marital disharmony is a total no-no, but hacking up a graceful, gentle creature with a meat cleaver is viewed as a bit of wholesome family entertainment.

What strange people.

□□□

SO White Dee, the matriarch of Channel 4 documentary series Benefits Street, has reportedly been offered £60,000 to appear in the next series of I'm A Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here!

Even more bizarrely, one newspaper report claims the, ahem, larger-than-life character has been offered a further £20,000 to pose topless.

Presumably, that must be an A3 centre spread.

Meanwhile, two other dysfunctional residents, former benefit cheats Mark and Becky, have now decided to turn their hands to a spot of free enterprise, selling their autographs on eBay.

Do you still think that they are poor, misrepresented victims who were conned into taking part in the show?



Chris Powdrill loads up blood on his motorcycle



Chris Powdrill leaves the Princess Royal Hospital



Ben Wilkes ensures that everything is in place

THROUGH THE YEARS

1984

CONTROVERSIAL satire show Spitting Image sparked outrage among MPs over a new puppet portraying 19-month-old Prince William as a petulant, bawling brat.

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TRIUMPH was to become the latest famous British motoring name to pass into the history books. British Leyland announced that the Triumph Acclaim, a version of the Honda Ballade built under licence at Longbridge, would be the last car to bear the name. A new generation of the car, based on the latest Ballade, was due to start production later in the year, but would be badged as a Rover. The Triumph Cycle Co dated back to 1897, and began building cars in the 1930s.

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A HOME defeat to Southampton in front of a crowd of less than 10,000 left Wolves rooted to the foot of the First Division, Birmingham City, Leicester and West Bromwich Albion occupied the three places immediately above.

1994

MICHAEL Barrymore was named Showbusiness Personality of the Year by the Variety Club charity at a lunch at London's Hilton Hotel. The comic, who attended the award ceremony with his wife Cheryl, had just clinched a £200,000 deal.

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JAPANESE car giant Honda announced the end of its 15-year partnership with the Rover Group, following the controversial sale of the British car manufacturer to German rival BMW. Honda held a 20 per cent stake in the company that used to be known as British Leyland, and had offered to increase its shareholding to 48 per cent. But the Japanese company reacted furiously to news that BMW had bought an 80 per cent holding.

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ALLIED Carpets national headquarters in West Bromwich was to close, with the loss of 300 jobs, following a takeover by rival chain Carpetland.

2004

A COUPLE'S romantic night away proved too hot to handle when their scented candles started a fire at an hotel. Guests at the Holiday Inn at Great Barr had to be evacuated after the candles set light to curtains and a bedside table.

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TROUBLED Walsall footballer Paul Merson was ruled out of action for a month after he left the country for help with his addictions. The 35-year-old former Aston Villa and England star had joined the Saddlers the previous summer.

Blood bikers' gift of life to patients

They are now out on the streets with the mission to help those in need as CLARE DUNN explains

THEY are bikers – but not as you know them.

These motorcyclist enthusiasts are blood bikers – and their mission is to carry the gift of life to those in need.

The Shropshire and Staffordshire Blood Bikes will become a familiar sight on the region's roads.

Blood Bikes is a new emergency volunteer service for the out-of-hours delivery of blood and other medical items, such as breast milk for premature babies and microbiological samples, using specially-equipped motorbikes.

It operates 24/7, providing emergency transport every night, at weekends and over bank holidays.

It is funded by donations and is free of charge to the NHS.

Chris Powdrill is chairman of the service and a qualified SSSB rider.

Motivated

The 71-year-old, from Market Drayton, said: "Blood bikes sprouted along mainly the south coast and the Home Counties.

"It has gradually spread over the years and Shropshire and Staffordshire are one of the last to get a group formed. It started in June last year when a meeting was first held in Telford. From then we have grown in number.

"At the moment we are looking at somewhere around the 50 mark for members and they come from all walks of life like myself, who are retired, and there are some in full-time employment who are giving up their spare time to do it.

"They are mostly motivated by wanting to put something back into the community. It is not that we want to ride



Andy Harris, Chris Powdrill, Ben Wilkes and Mike Chebsey prepare for transport

bikes all over the place, although we enjoy riding bikes, it is more that something has touched us along the way and we want to give something back to the community."

He added all of the organisation's manpower was currently voluntary and the greatest need was a steady stream of income to cover the running costs of equipment, bikes, clothing and protective covers for boxes.

"That enables us to deliver the service free of charge to the NHS.

"That is the key aim of the group," he explained. When they receive a call, the

blood bikers aim to be on site within 45 minutes – whether it is Shrewsbury's Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, the Princess Royal in Gobowen, near Oswestry, or the University Hospital North Staffordshire.

"We will then pick up whatever has got to be moved and take it to the destination point," says Mr Powdrill.

The service will save the NHS up to £300 a trip as it will do away with the need for hospitals to use commercial couriers and even taxis out of hours.

Mr Powdrill, who has been biking since he was 16-years-old, says: "Any-

thing that you do to help the NHS at the moment is actually helping your own community."

At present the Shropshire and Staffordshire Blood Bikes has two bikes and the aim is to raise enough money to eventually have six.

The service works on a rota. The controller takes the call and notifies the duty rider who is on call working 7pm until 6am.

All volunteer riders have passed an Advanced Motorcycle Test and are all independently assessed by an ex-police motorcycle instructor before being qualified to ride for the Blood Bikes service.

Another blood biker is ex-Staffordshire policeman Ben Wilkes, 58, of Ru-

geley.

He spent many of his policing years in the Lichfield and Burton areas.

He said: "For me, doing what we do means we can continue to enjoy that passion of motorcycling.

"But for me as well, I have spent much of my life doing things in a voluntary capacity and I get so much satisfaction out of it, it is immeasurable."

Benefit

Sheila Fryer, business manager for pathology at The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust, said: "We're delighted Blood Bikes is launching in the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin area and that our patients will be able to benefit from this."

"Rapid response for the transport of urgent blood and other specimens is vital and our partnership with Blood Bikes will help us ensure they are processed in a timely and effective manner."

Shropshire and Staffordshire Blood Bikes is being launched at RAF Cosford tomorrow with special guests four times World Superbikes Champion Carl Fogarty and ex-British champion James Whitham.

Anyone who is wanting to find out more information or wanting to raise funds for the SSSB should visit <http://shropshireandstaffordshirebloodbikes.wordpress.com/>

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Grand total for Rotary collection

ON BEHALF of the Rotary Club of Sedgley & Wombourne, we would like to thank everyone in the Wombourne and Sedgley areas who contributed so generously to our annual house-to-house collections during December 2013, together with the patrons of Ashwood Garden Centre, the Sedgley Co-op and at Sainsbury's of Wombourne.

We are delighted to be able to report that in spite of the current difficult economic climate, we have successfully raised a magnificent total of just over £4,000.

This wonderful achievement now enables us to continue our important work of sup-

porting the many local charities with which we continue to be associated.

A breakdown of the total amount collected by area shows that £1,012 was donated in our house-to-house collections in Sedgley.

There was £550 donated in our house-to-house collections in Wombourne with a further £2,579 at our static collections at Ashwoods Garden Centre, Sedgley Co-op and at Sainsbury's of Wombourne.

ROY CLEAVER
President

Labour's record in power

IT is to their credit that most of the senior ministers of the last Labour Government have admitted to their disastrous mistakes during their time in office, i.e. selling off our gold reserves in return for the fated Euro; the disastrous handling of the banking sector; the immigration fiasco; identifying our future shortage of power generation but doing nothing about it; not to mention the neglect of our car manufacturing and selling off our iron and steel industry.

Yet the Member of Parliament for Dudley North Mr Ian Austin, seems to be oblivious to all of this as he, tiresomely, makes his hypercritical comments on the present Government who, it seems, are achieving success in improving our country's economy.

A little more humility from Mr Austin wouldn't go amiss.

I am not a Tory, Labour or Lib-Dem voter.

T CROFT
Wall Heath

LETTERS to the Editor

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

E-MAIL

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Climate change is destined for the bin

REGARDING the letter from R Taberner, I do not think you will find that extreme weather events are more frequent. The Prime Minister would like to think we can blame them on climate change so he can tax us excessively. Climate scientists would be all out of a job if they couldn't produce any evidence, however far-fetched.

I gather the Arctic icecap is rather substantial and it looks as though the Antarctic midsummer is still cold enough to leave shiploads of tourists trapped in ice for days.

The so-called problem is blamed on carbon dioxide but they don't tell us that this gas which is vital for all

life on earth, is present on the atmosphere at less than one twentieth of one per cent. As 'global warming' has now been swept under the carpet to join 'acid rain' and the 'ozone layer', let us hope 'climate change' is soon to join them in the dustbin of history.

I do agree that we must rethink energy policies.

First of all, abandon those useless windmills. Then ignore the EU directives to close perfectly operational conventional power stations and get new nuclear power stations built soon, preferably by British firms. Or else the lights will go out!

A WILKINS
Buttermere Close
Brierley Hill

C GWILLIAMS
Brierley Hill

Listen to the farmers

THERE will always be those who refuse to accept that anything is going wrong with the climate. But the words of those affected by the floods are more powerful than any statistics. Time and again, they say that they have never known the like in their lifetimes.

The farmers in the Somerset Levels, the tourist-dependent businesses in Cornwall and West Wales, firms that depend on their links to the rest of the country, all know their future is in jeopardy. Small wonder that farming has one of the highest incidences of suicide.

The poor drainage due to the rivers not being dredged does not explain the battering that the coast has received on the unprecedented level of rainfall.

R TABERNER
Tividale

Help flooding victims first

IF George Osborne can afford to give the people of Syria £600m then the least he can do is match that amount to provide aid for the people devastated by the recent weather conditions and flooding in Great Britain.

It is about time our Government looked after the people who pay their wages and get our own house in order before giving away such large amounts of money.

We need a Government who will get us back on our feet, not get us deeper in debt.

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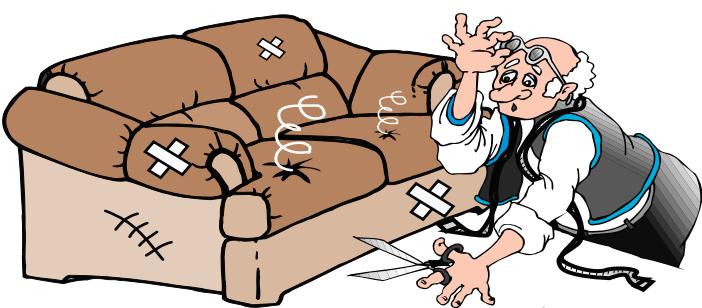
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CLUB NEWS

Silence in memory of ex-member

WOLLASTON E TWG

CHAIRMAN Jean Latham opened the January meeting with a welcoming 'Happy New Year' to the 50 members and three visitors who were in attendance.

A minute's silence was observed for Maureen Taylor, a former member who had served on the committee.

The secretary then read out the minutes of the previous meeting, which were duly passed. Members were informed that all minute books were available for their perusal at all guild meetings. Thank you letters had been received from neighbouring club members who had attended the Christmas party, expressing their enjoyment of the evening.

The Federation is organising a St George's Day event in Wollaston Village Hall on April 23. A lunch visit to the College of Food in Birmingham has been arranged on March 18.

Proceeds from the carol service and Christmas party amounted to approximately £160 and will be divided and sent to the cancer unit of Birmingham Children's Hospital and Acorns Children's Hospice.

Clive Garner gave an interesting and amusing talk on the art of painting on silk, fascinating members as he actually worked on a painting during his talk.

Raffle prizes went to Joy Heath and Margaret Gregory and the competition was won by Shirley Horne and Madeline Dunn.

Hedgehog lady to address meeting

BILBROOK WI

FOLLOWING the usual business and the singing of Jerusalem, president Julie introduced the speakers for the month, Annette and John Christophers from Albrighton Potteries.

John gave a very interesting talk on the history of clay before Annette then gave a demonstration on how to make a clay disc with her initials and a flower motif.

Every member was given a piece of clay to do the same but the motif was to represent a hobby. Annette then transformed all the discs in to one large terracotta pot showing all the members' initials on the outside. Annette said they would take it back with them and "fire" it, then it could be collected free of charge.

The April meeting will be on the second Monday, the 14th from 2-4pm, and the speaker will be the Hedgehog Lady Joan Lockley of the West Midlands Hedgehog Rescue Centre.

Entry is £2.50 to include light refreshments.



Hedgehog lady Joan Lockley will be guest speaker

Outings discussed by group

MY TIME OVER FIFTIES

using local coach companies. MyTime Over Fifties meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month in the Amblecote room at Stourbridge Town Hall at 2pm.

The next meeting will be on February 26 when Mr Roy Peacock will be speaking. His subject is The Queen's Jubilee Maundy Money. For more information call Audrey 01384 864223 or Graham 01384 393483

There was no speaker in January, instead members and visitors enjoyed a beetle drive, bring and buy and a cake stall. The money raised will be donated to the Air Ambulance Service, the charity chosen by the members of the group.

Following tea and cake, the group planned meals out and discussed outings

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NEWS

Wanted man seized in rooftop stand-off

THIS was the moment one of the West Midlands' most wanted men was arrested as police descended on a Black Country street.

Officers were called to Bridge Street, Tipton, in an effort to find a different suspect who was wanted for stealing a van from a pub car park in Tipton last month.

They arrested a 25-year-old, but a second man, 34-year-old Gavin Reilly, was also found at the scene.

Police say he was wanted for a series of robberies at shops and petrol stations across the Black Country where cigarettes were stolen.

Tiles

He allegedly climbed onto a roof and threw tiles at officers on the ground before they talked him down. He was arrested on suspicion of robbery and taken into custody.

A police helicopter was also involved in the operation which took place on Saturday morning.

Susan Whittaker, 54, of Toll End Road, said: "I've never seen anything like it. It was completely out of the blue."

"One minute there were just a few people milling about and then all of a sudden out of nowhere came all these police cars. I couldn't see what was happening but they were all crowded around one part of the street. There was a lot of shouting."

"I heard someone had been arrested. I hate to think how long he had been hiding out there."

"It just proves it's no good running from the law, I suppose."

A shop worker in Bridge Road said: "There were about 15 cars there, some vans and some dogs. It all looked very dramatic but no-one really knew what was happening."

Police took to social media sites



Police officers approach the suspect on a roof in Tipton

Twitter to label the arrest as 'elegant'.

Traffic officers from West Midlands Police said: "Operations dogs and traffic support in the arrest of West Midlands most wanted, one in custody, excellent arrest."

And the Birmingham branch of the National Police Air Service added: "In

a manner that looked like flying we were blown rather bumpy to Tipton for wanted person on roof who came down as we were overhead."

Pictures were tweeted of the dramatic scene showing several police cars parked in Bridge Street. Residents were shocked to see the large police presence.

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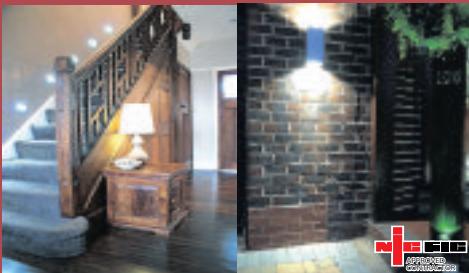
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GPs visit patients at home only if they decide there is a medical need. If your surgery is closed and you need urgent advice or treatment, call **NHS 111**.



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- Collection of repeat prescriptions from your doctor's surgery and delivery of medicines to your home
- Emergency contraception ('morning-after' pill) from some pharmacies
- Help in an emergency if you are unable to contact your GP and medication
- Extended opening hours

NHS 111/Walk-in Centre

NHS 111

NHS 111 provides confidential health advice and information by telephone 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Experienced call handlers will assess the condition and advise you where to go for help; make a GP appointment for you or despatch an ambulance in the case of an emergency. Dial **111**.

Walk-in Centre

Dudley Walk-in centre for minor illnesses and injuries that do not need hospital treatment is at:

Dudley Borough Walk-in Centre, Holly Hall Clinic, Stourbridge Road, Dudley, DY1 2ER. Telephone: 0330 123 9225

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No appointment necessary. Babies under the age of 12 months must be seen by their own GP.

Advice and treatment for complaints including:

- Minor cuts, bruises, burns, scalds, insect bites
- Muscle and joint injuries, back pain
- Coughs, colds, headache and dizziness
- Stomach ache, indigestion, constipation
- Ear, nose and throat problems including minor infections and sore throats, eye problems such as conjunctivitis and styes
- Skin complaints including rashes, minor allergic reactions, scabies, head lice and nappy rash
- Genito-urinary complaints such as urinary infections and thrush
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Serious Injury, Sudden Severe Illness or Medical Emergency

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Only go to a hospital A&E department in the event of an accident or emergency. An emergency is a critical or life-threatening situation such as:

- Unconsciousness
- Suspected broken bones
- Heavy blood loss
- Suspected heart attack
- Deep wounds - such as a stab wound
- Breathing difficulties
- Chest pain
- Head injuries

If you are unsure whether a health problem is an emergency needing A&E treatment, call your GP or **NHS 111** for advice.

Call 999 for the ambulance service

Call 999 for an ambulance if the patient:

- Has had chest pains for more than 15 minutes
- Is not breathing/is having difficulty breathing/is choking
- Is unconscious
- Is bleeding heavily
- Is in severe abdominal pain
- Bleeding from the vagina and could be pregnant
- Is in the final stages of labour
- May have had a stroke, fit or convulsion
- May have taken an overdose
- Has severe burns
- Has suspected head or spinal injuries
- Has had a severe allergic reaction

Further instructions will be given over the phone by a specially trained call taker and, if appropriate, an ambulance will be sent.

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MEMORY LANE



Norman Catton with Dennis and John Rose at the grave of grandfather, Private James Southall



First World War soldier James Southall from Cradley



The funeral procession of Sergeant Joe Tyler from Cradley



Sergeant Joe Tyler died of illness caught when serving abroad

Projects bringing stories back from beyond overgrown graves

By Louise Jew

THEY joined up gladly to fight for king and country 100 years ago but 117 men from one small town ended up paying the ultimate sacrifice in the mud-soaked bloodbath that was the First World War.

Now a labour of love by a group of ex servicemen, who have been untangling war graves snarled up by brambles and weeds in St Peter's churchyard, Cradley, is bringing to life the stories of at some of those heroes.

The Cradley men who perished in France, Flanders, Salonika in Greece, and further afield in Gallipoli, Turkey and Iraq, were among almost 900,000 British servicemen killed in the 1914-18 war.

Men like father-of-two Private James Southall, who joined up with

the 2nd Battalion of the Worcester Regiment, enlisting at Dudley near the start of the First World War in 1914. Rowley Regis-born Private Southall, who lived in Cradley, where he went to Colley Lane School, wrote home. He said: "Glad to know the boys of Cradley have turned out very well."

Memorial

But that optimism was short lived. He was killed in action in France on Wednesday August 23 1916, aged 26. Although he is buried in Lonsdale Cemetery, Auchuille, in the Somme region of France, a beautiful memorial to him has now been uncovered from the vegetation that was smothering it in St Peter's churchyard.

His widow, Dora – left with two little children and working as a chaimaker in the back yard

of their home in New Street – scraped together to pay sixpence a week for that Italian marble memorial stone and that was at a time when a labourer might earn 26 shillings per week. Their son Jesse was killed aged 15 in a factory accident in Old Hill in 1929.

As the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the Great War approaches this summer, around the Black Country, projects have sprung up to make sure there is a fitting tribute to the men who sacrificed their lives.

Members of Cradley and District Ex Service Association have been busy clearing graves at St Peter's, so far uncovering five from the First World War, seven from the Second World War and even one from the Second Boer War.

In Sedgley, a group at All Saints' Church is tracing information about the 70 servicemen

and women on the local war memorial. Members of Wall Heath and Kingswinford War Memorials Research Group has so far pieced together information about 107 of the 112 men from their area known to have served in the two biggest conflicts of the 20th century.

Two historians from Lye are also researching First World War gravestones for a commemorative book to coincide with the centenary of the outbreak of war. Jean Weston and Marlene Price hope to tell the stories of 29 men who fought in the Great War, 15 of whom are buried at Lye and Wollescote Cemetery in Commonwealth war graves.

All of these projects aim to bring to life the stories of these brave men who are long since gone.

Cradley-born retired Halesowen College lecturer Peter Barnsley, 79, of Meadow Croft, Hagley, who had been fatally wounded.

has researched the first military funeral held in Cradley for more than 50 years. It was in 1916, for Joe Tyler, described as a 'nice, quiet sort of chap' who was engaged to be married.

A chorister and Sunday School teacher, Joe volunteered and enlisted in the 3rd Birmingham City City Battalion of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment soon after war was declared. He became a cook, setting off to France in the autumn of 1915. But Sgt Tyler's cooking duties did not protect him from German fire. He was the first man to reach another soldier, Private Bert Coley, of Cradley Heath, who had been fatally wounded.

Sgt Tyler got through the fighting without a scratch but fell ill with dysentery, was invalided home and spent several months in a Devon hospital before returning home to die on August 27, 1916, aged 27.

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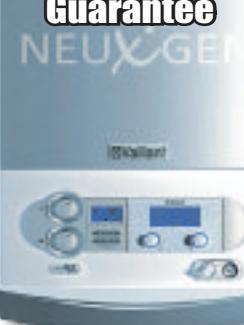
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NEWS

Baggies charity effort kicks in with £9,000

MEMBERS of The Albion foundation have said a massive thank you to Baggies fans who helped them raise thousands of pounds in their latest charity appeal.

Fans and footballers both showed their support for the charity during the team's match against Liverpool on Sunday, February 2, which helped raise more than £9,000, towards their £15,000 target.

Before kick-off, Pepe Mel's players warmed up wearing Albion Foundation-branded T-shirts, which were then thrown to fans in the crowd and then put on specially-designed match shirts. Each squad member has signed their own shirt, which was set to be auctioned off in aid of the Foundation.

The celebration came at the end of a week of difficult challenges for the group, which saw five of the Foundation's blind footballers – Simon Hill, Darren Harris, Ian McNamara, Shamim Ral and Ibraheem Iqbal – complete a gruelling 86-mile trek from Anfield Stadium to Huddersfield on Tuesday.

Guided by disability team members Adam Crowle, Paul Glover, Ajay Gill, Andy Turnbull and Paul Hunt, who completed the challenge in his wheelchair, they arrived in the Black Country in time for the game. They were welcomed by fans from both sides with a rapturous applause as they completed a lap of honour at half-time.

Rob Lake, director of The Albion Foundation, claimed Victor Anichebe's equaliser, which earned the Baggies a vital point, capped a great day for the charity.

"We're absolutely delighted with how much we've managed to raise so far and are very hopeful we can reach our target," said Lake, who also completed "Walk The Albion Way".

"The supporters have got right be-



A delighted Rob Lake, of the Albion Foundation after £9,000 was raised

and us given generously and yesterday was a fitting end to an amazing week. The reception we got from both sets of fans was incredible."

Each week, the Foundation's staff deliver over 650 hours of provision and work to more than 8,200 disabled participants as they seek to meet sporting, recreational, health and educational

needs in Sandwell, Dudley and surrounding areas.

Anyone who did not donate yesterday can still do so in the following

ways: text WTAW14 to 70070 to donate £5, or visit: www.justgiving.com/albionfoundation. People wanting to bid on the signed shirts can visit www.wba.co.uk.

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NEWS

Steelers to prove their mettle as team starts

THE Superbowl may have brought the curtain down on the American Football season stateside, but a new Black Country team is just gearing up for their first competitive campaign.

The Sandwell Steelers are set to run three teams this year, at men's, women's and youth level.

And club bosses are still on the hunt-hunt for new players to join the upcoming battle.

The men's senior team is seeking 18-year-olds and over to help them compete in the six-team Midlands Conference League against the likes of Shropshire Revolution and Oxford Saints.

The women's team, also for those aged 18 and above, will be playing 'full-contact' practise games this year with a view to entering the women's regional league in 2015.

Recruitment

The Steelers youth team are recruiting 14 to 17 year olds to compete in a number of tournaments.

Steve Hannington, Sandwell Steelers chief executive, said: "Our sport is developing very quickly in the UK and we are always on the lookout for more players at every level."

In preparation for the new season members of the squad held a fundraising and recruitment day at the Asda store in Wednesbury Oak Road, Tipton.

Players packed bags and collected donations from shoppers, raiing £500.38 to contribute towards club running costs and the purchase of equipment.

Tom Edmonds, senior coach and women's team general manager, said: "We had lots of interest from potential new players for all of our teams and



Richard Fisher, with members of the Sandwell Steelers American Football Club

we would like to thank both Asda and everyone who donated for their continuing support for our club."

Anyone interested in joining the Steelers can go along and find out more at training sessions at Tipton Sport Academy, Wednesbury Oak Road, Tipton, from 1pm till 3pm, every Sunday, and Portway Lifestyle

Centre, Oldbury, from 8pm-10pm, every Wednesday. For more information visit: info@sandwellsteelers.com Or, anyone interested can also find the team on Facebook at www.facebook.com/SandwellSteelersAmericanFootballClub, for the men's team; and www.facebook.com/SandwellSWAFC, for the women's team.

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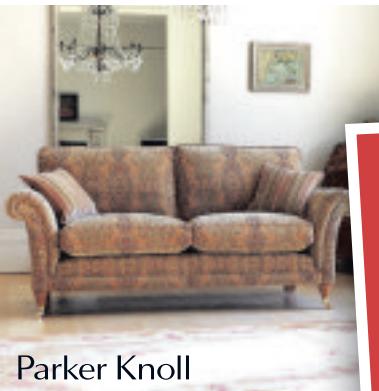
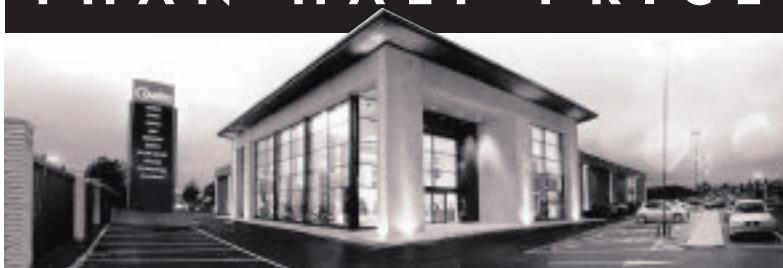
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NEWS

Head girl gains free place at a top school

HEAD girl Xara Davies may come from an 'ordinary' Black Country family but now she's won a free place at one of the world's leading independent schools.

The 16-year-old from Dudley, who attends Four Dwellings Academy in Quinton, and is predicted to gain A* and A grades in her GCSEs, passed rigorous entrance exams to get into the sixth form at Cheltenham Ladies' College.

After shining at her interviews there, she was offered a fully funded bursary for the college, where fees are normally more than £30,000 a year.

Talented

Vice principal at Four Dwellings Academy Ian Trevethick, who came up with the idea for her to apply to the top college, said: "Xara is a bit of a special girl. She's very talented and deserves the chance to excel."

Xara, who lives with parents, Ken and Vanessa, and brothers, Mason, aged 11, and Harvey, 10, in Warrens Hall Road, Sledmere Estate, Dudley, said: "I'm very excited and proud."

She is set to study A Levels in history, maths, further maths, English literature, government and politics when she starts at Cheltenham Ladies' College in September. Xara is also a pianist and performs in productions at Birmingham's Crescent Theatre.

Mr Trevethick said: "Cheltenham Ladies' College were very keen to have her. She came second among all the entrants to the college from all over the world. The offer of a place there is unconditional upon her results this summer but we are predicting a clutch of A* and As for her."

He added: "She is very mature and is our head girl. She is also a caring, kind and considerate and fully focused."



Xara Davies 16, with Four Dwellings vice principal Ian Trevethick

Xara is not the first Four Dwellings pupil to win a free place at a top public school.

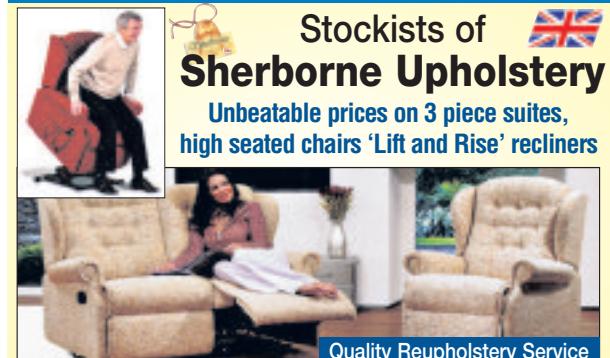
In 2010 Jake Hayden-Wright went to study at Eton, the school near Windsor that has produced 18 Prime Ministers, including David Cameron.

Mr Trevethick now has hopes that Xara may aim for a place at one of

America's 'Ivy League' universities, such as Harvard or Yale. She says she would ultimately like to be a lawyer or psychologist.

Xara's mother Vanessa said: "We're just an ordinary family and we are extremely proud of our daughter's wonderful achievement, as are her brothers."

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NEWS

NEWS
in brief

Islamic education centre is proposed

AN ISLAMIC education centre which would play host to classes teaching the Qur'an and work with nearby schools will open at the site of a empty pub, under new proposals.

The Old Bell at Lye pub would be transformed in plans unveiled by a charitable trust known as the Islamic Community and Education Centre.

Centre officials have purchased the boarded up pub, in Chapel Street, to create a community venue to host a range of 'lifestyle studies and personal development programmes'.

Rashid Aziz has submitted the proposals to Dudley Council on behalf of the Islamic Community and Education Centre organisation. A decision will be taken in the coming weeks.

Cradley Heathens open club shop

THE Cradley Heathens speedway team is to open a club shop selling merchandise.

They have teamed up with T-shirt printers Printworx in Quarry Bank to start the new store for fans.

The partnership comes after the National League team's supporters' club stepped down from its responsibility for club merchandise.

The shop will be in High Street.

Heathens chairman Nigel Pearson said: "This is a great opportunity for the club to have a presence in Quarry Bank, close to the old stadium."

Student, 18, died from blood clot after a scan

AN 18-year-old student died from a blood clot just a week after a scan failed to reveal any sign of deep vein thrombosis, an inquest heard.

Laura Pincher was rushed to Russells Hall Hospital on October 28 after collapsing at her home in Stourbridge. Medics battled for nearly an hour to save her life but were unable to revive her.

Dudley Coroners Court heard Laura, a student at Stourbridge College, had died from a blood clot in her lungs as a consequence of deep vein thrombosis caused by morbid obesity.

Assistant coroner for the Black Country Mr Angus Smillie heard the 18-year-old, of Hadcroft Grange, had visited Three Villages Medical Practice, Stourbridge, on October 21 complaining of pain in her left calf.

Tests

She was immediately referred to Russells Hall Hospital's deep vein thrombosis service and underwent blood tests and an assessment on the same day.

The blood tests had not been available when the service closed for the day and the process was completed by the Emergency Assessment Unit that evening.

Laura was given an appointment to undergo a scan to check for a clot in her leg the next day.

Dr Anthony D'Sa, a specialist in radiology at the hospital, carried out the ultrasound scan with a

by Lee Watton

trainee. He told the inquest it had been 'a difficult scan' but was satisfied no signs of a clot were detected.

"The evidence of the scan did not lead us to accept there was a clot present," he said.

The inquest was told Laura had visited GP Dr Jonathan Tatton, at Three Villages, the following day who had looked at alternative causes for her leg pain.

He told the inquest as the test for a blood clot had only been carried out the day before he had not believed sending Laura for another scan would be an appropriate step.

National guidelines say at least seven days should elapse before another test is considered.

Laura's family told the hearing they believe she should have had another scan.

Mr Smillie recorded a conclusion of death by natural causes. But Laura's heartbroken family said they were not satisfied and plan to take matters further.

Keeper finds 420 million year old fossil



Langan Turner with the limestone rock containing a coral fossil found at Dudley Zoo

A 420 million-year-old fossil has been unearthed in the grounds of Dudley Zoo. It is believed to date back to the Silurian period and shows a piece of coral.

The fossil was found near to the hunting dogs enclosure at the popular tourist attraction.

The large piece of Wenlock Limestone has now been donated to the Discovery Centre for presenters to use in their education workshops. It was discovered by big cat keeper, Adam Walker.

Zoo presenter Langan Turner said: "The fossil is very impressive and clearly shows a piece of reef building coral on top, which tells us it would have grown in clear, tropical waters. This would date back to the Silurian period, so the fossil is probably around 420 million years old. Dudley is known world wide for the quality of these fossils and we're lucky to have found similar fossils across the zoo site, but this one is beautifully clear and tells us much more about the environment than any others we have."

The newly found fossil will be used in evolution and prehistoric life workshops for schools.

Last phase of water pipe work is to start

WORK will begin tomorrow on the final part of a £400,000 project to repair a huge underground water pipe supplying thousands of homes across the Black Country.

South Staffordshire Water recently completed underground work on the main below the Birmingham New Road but now work needs to be done on repairing the road surface.

Closures

It will mean the road, which runs between Wolverhampton and Dudley, will be hit with closures this month.

From February 14 at 6.30pm to February 17 at midnight, both lanes southbound on the dual carriageway will be closed, plus one northbound.

Then, from February 21 at 6.30pm to midnight on February 24, both lanes northbound will be closed and one lane southbound. A diversion will be in place taking motorists on the A463 and A461 Black Country Route.

Rachel Barber, customer service director, said: "By working with the council, and by including some overnight working, we will limit the disruption caused to road users and local residents."

"Plus, as we're working during the school half-term holiday, under council guidance, there should be less traffic on the road. We do still apologise to road users for any inconvenience."

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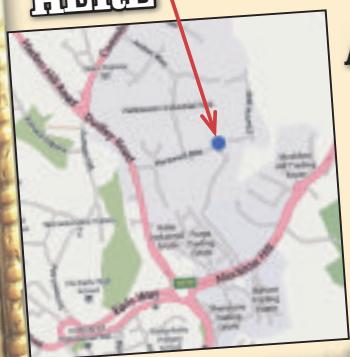
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- Services of a tour driver
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Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Tour de France Grand Départ Yorkshire 2014

Three days departing July 4

PRICE FROM

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- Two nights half-board accommodation
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- Visit to Leeds
- Services of a tour driver
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

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Three days departing May 9, June 27, September 19

PRICE FROM

£139

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Organised by Newmarket Promotions (ABTA V787X)

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- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

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PRICE FROM

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- Seven nights bed and breakfast or half-board accommodation
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- Optional excursions offered
- Services of a resort manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Newmarket Air Holidays (ABTA V7812, ATOL 2325)



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Call for more female ministers

A TORY MP has urged David Cameron to promote more women to the Government's front bench.

Margot James praised progress made by Mr Cameron since he became Conservative leader in 2005. But the Stourbridge MP, a parliamentary aide to trade minister Lord Livingston, said he needed to go further.

Her comments came after Labour leader Ed Miliband used Prime Minister's Questions to berate Mr Cameron for the lack of women on his front bench.

"We certainly have a long way to go but so do the Labour Party," Miss James said. "There are the same number of women Cabinet ministers in this government as there were in Gordon Brown's government.

"We started later than the Labour Party. David Cameron was the first leader to make a real concerted effort."

Business rate break in bid to revive The Waterfront

MORE than 20 years ago former employment secretary Michael Portillo stood on a canal bridge overlooking The Waterfront business centre in Brierley Hill and hailed the district a 'tremendous revolution' for jobs.

He spoke of the success of a 10-year business rate break offered to new firms at the once-vibrant site and cut a ribbon opening the Waterfront East development, which created a further 2,500 jobs.

But since that high profile visit, the area has

been hit by the economic downturn and the site now stands with more than a third of office space empty following the departure of many major firms including Lloyds Banking Group.

Dudley Council has now unveiled a proposal bosses hope will repeat the success of the Government enterprise zone 20 years ago and reverse the trend of decline.

Bill

The Dudley Business Investment Zone will last for five years and will offer new and expanding firms a two-year break in business rates — with the council and landlords footing the bill

— which could run as high as £550,000. The scheme, which goes to the council's cabinet for approval this week, could create 1,600 jobs at The Waterfront.

Finance boss Councillor Pete Lowe said: "Should this scheme be approved, the economic benefits would increase significantly, with an additional 1,600 jobs coming from the re-occupation of the existing site."

The site has 750,000 sq ft of office space with about 2,500 people working there but 300,000 sq ft of office space is empty.

About 40 businesses are located in the complex.

Potholes are to be repaired

POTHOLE repairs will be taking place at a household waste recycling centre.

The normal vehicle entrance to the site in Birmingham Street, Stourbridge will be closed tomorrow from 8am to 6pm.

Traffic will be redirected with signs to the Stamford Road entrance. Once the pothole work is complete the normal entrance will re-open.

Following the re-opening of Birmingham Street, Stamford Road will then be closed so that work on this area can be carried out.

Councillor Tracy Wood, cabinet member for environment and culture said: "The site will remain open during these essential works and we hope that residents will be understanding in the change to the access on February 14."

"The pothole repairs will improve the road surface for everyone using the site."

Traders in parking petition



Worried Gaz Khan, front, is pictured with fellow concerned traders in Tividale

A BUSINESSMAN is leading a campaign for restrictions on parking spaces outside his store, which he claims are being blocked up by residents.

Gaz Khan, who runs Lifestyle Express on Tividale Road, Tividale, says traders are suffering because of where residents are parking.

Mr Khan, who has lived in the same street for nearly 30 years, is now gathering a petition calling for Sandwell Council to remedy the situation.

Nothing

He said: "I first approached the council about this issue about eight months ago and I have spoken to them about it a few times but nothing has happened.

"The problem is residents are parking in the spaces so there is nowhere for the businesses' customers to park.

Very last chance to nominate for awards

Husband found dead

A ROAD worker was found hanged from a loft hatch at his home, an inquest heard.

Robert McTaggart, of Crowsbridge Mews, Hurst Hill, Coseley, was found by his wife on January 31.

Smethwick Coroner's Court heard the 42-year-old got out of bed before his wife. When she woke up, she found him hanged from the loft hatch of their home.

He was pronounced dead at 7.31am.

The inquest was adjourned for further inquiries.

THERE are only a few days left for people to nominate their unsung heroes for a top civic honour. Community leaders, talented tutors and sports coaches can all be put forward for the Mayor of Dudley's Civic Awards.

Entries have already been winging their way to Dudley Council House but people only have until Monday to get their nominations in ahead of an awards ceremony in April.

Mayor Councillor Alan Finch said: "These awards depend on people getting involved and letting us know who the borough's unsung heroes are. We want to give these people and organisations the recognition they deserve."

There are six categories for business, sport, the arts, community spirit, education and the environment are open for entries. There is also a seventh trophy, the Mayor's Award, which will be announced later this month.

People can nominate online at the www.dudley.gov.uk/civicawards website or by calling 01384 817449 for a form.

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NEWS

Water levels and bills rise

WATER bills are on the rise as Severn Trent Water and South Staffs Water have both announced increases, which will come into effect in April.

Average water bills will go up by more than one per cent at a time when wide-scale flooding across the country has forced people to flee their homes.

Chiefs at Severn Trent admitted the bill rise was 'difficult' during the current financial climate, while South Staffs Water insisted they had worked hard to keep prices down.

Homes covered by Severn Trent Water will see bills go up by 1.1 per cent — £3 — to £333 from April, equating to £176 for water and £157 for sewerage services.

South Staffs Water has announced a 1.3 per cent rise in its water bills for 2014/15.

Talk over new owners for Merry Hill shopping centre

LANDMARK shopping centre Merry Hill is in talks to be taken over by a rival retail giant that runs major **Manchester malls**.

Owners Westfield is in discussion with prospective buyers Intu Properties over the future of the iconic centre.

The firm is thrashing out a deal to buy 50 per cent of the Brierley Hill complex, which is home to 290 shops and restaurants, and take over its management.

Intu runs more than a dozen prime shopping centres across the country, including Manches-

ter's Arndale and Trafford centres, and the Metrocentre in Gateshead. It is also in talks to buy another Westfield site in Derby.

Westfield would not comment on the plans but in a statement Intu's board said negotiations were ongoing.

Discussions

"The board of Intu confirms that it is in discussions with Westfield regarding the potential acquisition of its Derby shopping centre together with an equity interest in, and management contract for, Merry Hill in Dudley," the firm said.

"If the acquisition were to proceed, it is likely

that it would be funded through a combination of new debt and equity. However, although discussions are ongoing, there can be no certainty that any transaction will be undertaken.

"A further announcement will be made if and when appropriate."

More than 24 million shoppers descend on Merry Hill every year.

Australia-based Westfield bought it from previous owners Chelsfield in 2004.

It has since introduced more than 100 new retailers to the site and refurbished its shopping malls, while also overseeing a new £24m 1,200-seat food court, called Eat Central.

Sale coins may make a mint

TWO ancients coins are going under the hammer at a West Midlands auction house later this month.

The two coins, one Roman and the other from the reign of Richard III, are set to get collectors in a spin when they go on sale at Cuttlestones Auction Rooms in Wolverhampton on February 28.

The Roman coin marks the reign of the obscure Emperor Laetianus who, following an uprising, reigned for only a few months in AD268. It is expected to sell for between £500 and £700.

The second coin relates to the rule of the much-maligned Richard III, who has recently been dubbed the King in the car park following the discovery of his remains under a Leicester car park.

Viewing will be from 10am to 7pm on February 27 and the morning of the sale.

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Glass gift's link to a family tragedy



Graham Morris, left, shows John Swingewood the holder

A GLASS pen holder has revealed a tragic tale of birth and death following a meeting between its owner and the family of its creator, more than 70 years after it was made.

Owner Graham Morris had little idea about the heart-breaking story behind the perfectly-crafted piece he inherited from his mother and former mid-wife Sister Clara Morris after she died in 1993.

But following a meeting with the family of the maker William Henry Swingewood senior, the 66-year-old has had it confirmed it was presented as a gift to his mother who died nine days later because of complications from giving birth. John Swingewood, aged 74, was looked after by grandparents Lily and Mr Swingewood senior, who was a renowned glass maker in the Black Country at the start of the 20th century.

The sad twist to the tale is that Sister Morris was unable to save John Swingewood's mother Lily, who died nine days later because of complications from giving birth. John Swingewood, aged 74, was looked after by grandparents Lily and Mr Swingewood senior, who was a renowned glass maker in the Black Country at the start of the 20th century.

Last week John Swingewood and his son Paul, 48, met with Mr Morris to connect their life stories.

Fans and family in farewell to a legend

HE was a great man and a great goalkeeper but Wolves and England legend Bert Williams will be remembered just as much for his humility, generosity and kindness that endeared him to everyone who came into contact with him.

Around 700 family members, friends and Wolves supporters packed St Peter's Collegiate Church in Wolverhampton city centre to pay tribute to him at a special memorial service last week.

Mourners queued to get into the church and heard moving tales of a family man whose charm, modesty and sense of humour never left him. In a reading, television presenter and former Express & Star sports writer Bob Hall described Bert as 'only 5ft 9ins tall but a giant of a man.'

Bert loved words and was a regular writer of poetry. One was read out by his daughter-in-law Tania Williams.

Led by England World Cup winners Gordon Banks and Ron Flowers, players paid their respects.

NEWS

Choirs unite in concert to help fund charities

TWO of the Black Country's favourite choirs are joining forces to present a Spring Concert in Dudley Town Hall next month.

The Gentlemen Songsters Male Voice Choir and Viva Musica, are both based in Dudley, and both contribute significantly to the local area by their charitable fund raising.

They will be joining forces to perform on Saturday, March 29, at 7.30pm.

The Gentlemen Songsters were presented with the Mayor of Dudley's Award for services to the community in 2013. As their name suggests, it is an all male choir of about 73 members and was founded in 1957.

The mixed voice Viva Musica choir was founded in Dudley in 1989, and comprises about 70 voices.

Their combined selection of music includes classical, religious, modern and popular choral music together with items made famous by such artists as Queen, The Beatles, Elvis Presley and there are many other items from the popular West End musicals.

This concert offers a rare opportunity to see the two choirs appear on stage together.

They will perform individual items and a few joint items during the evening, during which the MC will be Michael Collie of BBC Midlands Today.

Proceeds from this concert will be divided between the charities which are being supported in 2014 by the two choirs.

Viva Musica are helping Parkinson's UK and the Gentlemen Songsters are supporting the Mayor of Dudley's Charity Appeal which this year supports White House Cancer Support in Dudley and Hearing Dogs for Deaf



The Gentlemen Songsters Male Voice Choir will be raising money



Mixed choir Viva Musica will perform in their own right and with the songsters

People. Tickets are priced at £10 and are available from Viva Musica on 01384 371388, the Gentlemen Songsters on 01384 838863, or from Dudley Council Plus on 01383 812812.

They are also available online at the www.dudley.gov.uk/entertainment website.

Meanwhile, other forthcoming concerts for the Gentlemen Songsters Male Voice Choir include taking part in a massed male voice choirs concert at Brierley Hill Civic Hall on June 21, a fundraising concert at Gig Mill Methodist Church in Stourbridge on July 5 and a similar event at Wollaston Free Church on July 11.

Viva Musica's next concert is in aid of Cystic Fibrosis fundraising and it takes place in New Road Methodist Church and in Stourbridge on March 1.

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An Express & Star supplement

Express & Star

What's On!

X-tra special as Joe comes to town
WINNER of the sixth series of The X Factor, Joe McElderry, is going to perform in concert at Dudley Town Hall next month.

The 22-year-old singer from South Shields scored a no1 hit at the end of 2009 with his version of The Climb after beating Olly Murs, Stacey Solomon and Jedward in that year's X Factor.

Has released three albums since his 2010 debut Wide Awake and went on to prove his vocal prowess by winning Popstar to Operastar in 2011.

His Set Your Soul Alive tour comes to the town hall on Thursday, March 6, at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £19.50 or £15 for under-14s. Call 01384 812812 or go online to www.dudley.gov.uk/see-and-do/entertainment/live/ or buy-a-ticket

A Transatlantic trio at the Mac

THERE is a rare chance to see three of the world's most respected acoustic/folk musicians together in the West Midlands. Michael McGoldrick, John McCusker and John Doyle will be playing the MAC in Edgbaston on February 23.

The musicians are regulars of the renowned Transatlantic Sessions. McGoldrick is a master of the flute, whistle and uilleann pipes and a member of Scottish folk group Capercaillie. McCusker is a renowned fiddle player and guitarist Doyle is steeped in Irish traditional music. Tickets are £15 or £12 concessions. See www.macarts.co.uk

American superstar brings bootylicious show to Brum

Japanese theme at the ballet

BALLET continues at Birmingham Hippodrome with the return of the home company Birmingham Royal Ballet.

They present Three Of A Kind, a triple bill of witty classics, from Wednesday to February 22. Card Game is danced to music by Stravinsky, Kenneth Macmillan's vibrant Elite Syncopations to ragtime and George Balanchine's thrilling Slaughter On Tenth Avenue features a dancer who knows that if he stops dancing a hitman in the audience will shoot him.

David Bintley brings The Prince of the Pagodas, set to Benjamin Britten's only commissioned ballet score and part of the Britten 100 celebrations, to the Hippodrome from February 25 to March 1. Featuring costumes by War Horse designer Rae Smith, it promises a spectacular Japanese fantasy. Call 0844 338 5000 or see the website www.birminghamhippodrome.com



A scene from the spectacular Japanese fantasy The Prince of the Pagodas

SUPERSTAR Beyoncé follows up her best live act award at the MTV European Music Awards by embarking on the European leg of The Mrs Carter Show Tour, including an eagerly-anticipated gig at Birmingham LG Arena on Sunday, February 23.

Beyoncé's raunchy performance of new single Drunk In Love with Jay Z at the Grammy awards propelled the song into the top ten on both sides of the Atlantic.

The 32-year-old Texan's latest solo album, her fifth since leaving Destiny's Child, is simply entitled Beyoncé and has won critical and popular acclaim, selling a million digital copies in its first week when released in December, and three million units by last month.

Rock

Other major gigs to look out for over the next week or so include stoner rock from New Jersey's Monster Magnet tomorrow night at the Wulfrun Hall, Massachusetts prog rockers Dream Theater at the Civic on Saturday, the same night Nick Dagger's Counterfeit Stones play the Robin 2 in Bilston.

Indie trio London Grammar are at Birmingham O2 Academy on Sunday. Hirsute Aussie folk-comedy outfit The Beards are at Brum's Glee Club on Monday and The Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain take the uke



Beyoncé coming to the LG
to a new level at Symphony Hall on Wednesday.

Texan outfit Midlake, who recently released Antiphon, their first album since guitarist Eri Pulido took over from former frontman Tim Smith, are at the Wulfrun on February 21. That's the same night that French masters of gipsy/Latin music The Gipsy Kings play the Civic Hall next door, former Westlife singer Shane Filan is at the Symphony Hall and John Bramwell, from Elbow's Mancunian mates I Am Kloot, is at the Glee.

Desperate Men for a reunion gig
MORE than 10 years since they played together, lead singer of Desperate Men John Richards, from Wolverhampton, has organised a reunion concert in the city. Richards is a respected figure on the folk circuit with his songs performed by Fairport Convention and Show of Hands.

He fronts The John Richards Band and previous outfit Desperate Men was formed from the ashes of Maurice and the Minors. The line up will comprise Paul Dowswell on guitar, Steve Watton on accordion, Dave Jones on drums, Ian Rowley bass and Richards' daughter Emma on vocals at Newhampton Arts Centre on February 27. Tickets £10 on 01902 572090. Coming to the centre this Saturday is Newcastle fiddler Tom McConville.

Byrne entering his roaring 40s

COMIC Ed Byrne has come of age. But instead of wallowing in self-despair, the Irish funnyman has taken a new approach to life after turning 40.

A stand-up for the past 20 years, Byrne may have been a self-confessed miserable old git for most of that time, but rather than prompting a mid-life crisis, he is actually embracing the milestone age as he brings his show to Wolverhampton next weekend.

The Roaring 40s show takes place at the Civic Hall on Saturday, February 22. Tickets are £24.75 on 0870 320 7000 or at boxoffice@wolvescivic.co.uk

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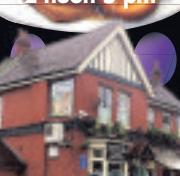
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What's On!

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CHOICE



Emma Willis

The Voice UK BBC1, 7.10pm

This is the penultimate week of blind auditions and the last few hopefuls need those chairs to spin round more than ever in the hope of becoming one of the stars' respective dozen. Team Kylie's Jai, Ricky recruit Kelsey-Beth, Tom's tuneful hopeful Mairead Conlon and Will.i.am's Jermaine Jackman may all have great voices, but there's no guarantee we'll remember any of them in a few months' time. Let's hope their post-Voice careers are not totally eclipsed by the new X Factor recruits when they debut in August.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast: **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live, **11.30** Food & Drink. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **12.45** Saturday Sportsday. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Live Athletics: British Grand Prix. **4.30** Final Score. **5.15** Reflex. **6.00** BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

6.20 Pointless Celebrities: Sport-themed charity edition, with Martin Freeman and Phil Tufnell, Mark Bright and Martin Peters, Susanna Murrell and Pete Reed, and John Parrott and Hazel Irvine. (R)

7.10 The Voice UK. Emma Willis and Marvin Humes are backstage for the penultimate week of blind auditions, with Kylie Minogue, Will.i.am, Tom Jones and Ricky Wilson looking to bolster their teams.

8.30 The National Lottery: Who Dares Wins. Nick Knowles hosts the game show in which two pairs of strangers list as much as they know about given subjects. Includes the Lotto and Thunderball draws, with Gaby Roslin.

9.20 Casualty. Lily becomes a magician's assistant.

10.10 Mr Brown's Boys. Agnes worries her family is too secretive. (R)

10.40 BBC News; Weather. (R) **11.00** Live at the Apollo. Comedy sets by Eddie Izzard, Josh Widdicombe and Trevor Noah. (R)

11.45 The Football League Show. Highlights of today's games.

1.00 Weatherview. **1.05** BBC News. (R)

BBC2

12.30 Live Winter Olympics. Further coverage of day eight from Russia. **4.30** Live Winter Olympics. The concluding coverage on day eight in Russia.

7.00 Winter Olympics: Today at the Games. Clare Balding interviews high-profile team day eight in Russia, where seven gold medals were decided in venues in Sochi and Krasnaya Polyana.

8.00 Top Gear. Richard Hammond drives the Alfa Romeo 4C, Jeremy Clarkson puts the McLaren P1 hypercar to the test and Thor star Tom Hiddleston drives the Reasonably Priced Car.

9.00 Film: True Grit. (2010) Premiere. A 14-year-old farm girl recruits a hard-drinking, one-eyed marshal to help her track down the man who killed her father. Western, with Jeff Bridges and Hailee Steinfeld.

10.15 QI XL. Rob Brydon, Phillip Jupitus, Cal Wilson and Alan Davies try to come up with interesting answers to some of the most pressing questions about journeys, in an extended version of the quiz.

11.00 Film: The Notorious Bettie Page. (2005) Biographical drama about the life of the controversial pin-up model whose bondage photographs created scandal in the 1950s. With Gretchen Mol.

1.00 Film: Love. (2011) Premiere. Sci-fi drama, starring Gunnar Jónasson, is set in two parallel universes of upcoming programmes. **5.00** Live Winter Olympics. Hazel Irvine introduces the opening events on day nine in Russia, featuring live curling, alpine skiing, ice hockey and snowboarding.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Pat & Stan. **6.10** Pat & Stan. **6.20** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.25** Dino Dan. **6.40** Dino Dan. (R) **6.50** Cannimals. (R) **7.00** Cannimals. (R) **7.05** Cannimals. (R) **7.10** Om Nom Stories. **7.15** Sooty. (R) **7.20** The Wiggles. (R) **7.30** Dinner Date. (R) **10.30** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.30** ITV News; Weather. **11.45** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. **12.35** The Crooked Tailor. (R) **1.05** The Unforgettable Mrs Wise. (R) **2.05** Film: You Only Live Twice. (R) **4.20** Regional Programme; Weather. **4.30** ITV News; Weather. **4.45** Live FA Cup Football.

7.20 Splash. Vernon Kay and Louis Smith prepare for the final, as Perri Kiely, Keith Duffy and last week's two best contestants attempt to dive their way to victory. Last night, Louis.

8.50 Take Me Out. A rugby player, a physiotherapist, a gymnastics coach and a drainage engineer try to impress and win a date to the Isle of Femmes. Pauline McGuinness presents.

10.05 The Jonathan Ross Show. Jonathan is joined by film star Uma Thurman, actor, comedian and Brit Awards host Craig Revel Horwood and Strictly Come Dancing winner Abbey Clancy. John Newman provides the music.

11.20 FA Cup Football Highlights. Matt Smith presents action from the semi-final round matches, which included Manchester City v Chelsea, Sunderland v Southampton and Cardiff City v Wigan Athletic.

12.20 Jackpot247. **3.00** In Plain Sight. (R) **3.45** ITV Nightscreen. (R) **4.00** Film: The Devil Knows You're Dead. (R) **2.45** Hollyoaks. (R) **4.50** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.45** Baking Mad with Eric Lanlard. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The Hoobs. (R) **6.35** The World Sport. **8.00** The Morning Line. **9.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.30** Frasier. (R) **10.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.00** I Met Your Mother. **11.25** How I Met Your Mother. **11.55** The Simpsons. (R) **12.30** Undercover Boss USA. (R) **1.25** Channel 4 Racing. **4.10** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.10** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.40** Come Dine with Me. (R) **6.45** 5 News Weekend.

6.50 NCIS. The team launches a manhunt with the help of the US Army's Lt Col Hollis Mann, determined to track down a terrorist who is threatening to unleash a chemical attack. (R)

7.35 NCIS. The agents try to track down an arms dealer in possession of the launch codes for a nuclear missile and satellite defence system, which he is offering to sell to the highest bidder. (R)

8.30 NCIS Movie: Judgement Day. The funeral of a special agent in Los Angeles leads Shepard on a covert mission to finish some classified business she began a decade previously in Europe. (R)

10.10 NCIS: Secrets in the Walls. (2010) A single mother investigates the haunting of her new home as her daughter comes under the influence of supernatural forces. Hosted with Jeri Ryan and Marianne Jean-Baptiste.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **6.10** Access: The Dog Rescuers. (R) **10.35** Film: Daddy Day Camp. (2007) **12.20** Film: Land of the Lost. (2009) **2.05** Film: Planet of the Apes. (2001) **2.20** Diagnosis Requiem for a Falling Star. (1973) **3.45** 5 News Weekend.

6.50 NCIS. The team launches a manhunt with the help of the US Army's Lt Col Hollis Mann, determined to track down a terrorist who is threatening to unleash a chemical attack. (R)

7.35 NCIS. The agents try to track down an arms dealer in possession of the launch codes for a nuclear missile and satellite defence system, which he is offering to sell to the highest bidder. (R)

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DIGITAL

BBC Three
2.00 Doctor Who: The Ultimate Guide **8.00** Great Movie Mistakes 2: The Sequel **9.00** Film: Meet the Fockers (2004) **10.55** Family Guy **BBC Four**
7.00 Wild China **8.00** Lost Kingdoms of South America **9.00** Salamanders **10.40** Boogie Fever: A TOTP2 Disco Special **ITV2**
2.15 Film: Horrible Harry: The Movie (2011) **5.15** Film: The Flintstones in Viva Rock Vegas (2000) **7.00** Film: Rumor Has It (2005) **9.00** Film: Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason (2004) **11.15** The Magaluf Weekend **ITV4**
3.45 Agatha Christie's Poirot **4.55** Inspector Morse **7.00** Rosemary & Thyme **8.00** Doc Martin **9.00** Vera **11.00** A Touch of Frost **ITV2**
2.15 Film: Ice Cold in Alex (1958) **4.55** Film: Superman (1978) **7.50** Hornblower 10 **2.00** Film: Rambo III (1988) Action adventure sequel, starring Sylvester Stallone. **E4**
3.30 How I Met Your Mother **4.30** Rules of Engagement **5.30** How I Met Your Mother **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **7.30** How I Met Your Mother **8.00** The Tomorrow People **9.00** Film: Roll Models (2008) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory **Film4**
3.10 California Man (1992) **4.50** Brewster's Millions (1985) **6.55** America's Sweethearts (2001) **9.00** Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen (2009) Sci-fi adventure featuring robots fight for control of a machine hidden somewhere on Earth with the power to destroy planets. Sci-fi adventure sequel, starring Shia LaBeouf and Megan Fox. **11.50** Scanners (1981)

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What's On!

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SUNDAY'S TV 16.02.14

CHOICE



Aidan McArdle

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast, 9.00 The Andrew Marr Show, 10.00 The Big Questions, 11.00 Sunday Politics, 12.15 Wanted Down Under Revisited, 1.00 BBC News: Weather, 1.15 Bargain Hunt, (R) 2.00 The Big Picture, (R) 2.45 Escape to the Country, (R) 3.30 Hidden Kingdoms, (R) 4.30 Lifeline, 4.40 Songs of Praise, 5.15 Pointless Celebrities, (R) 6.05 BBC News, Regional News, 6.30 Blandings, New series. Period comedy, starring Timothy West as the Honourable Duke of Dunsable comes to stay, with a dastardly plan to get his host out of the way. Henry Field guest stars.

7.00 Countryfile, A visit to Wiltshire, where Matt Baker goes out about the county's history at the forefront of the pig industry and Jules Hudson is at a help for Horserace recovery centre, including Weather for the Week Ahead.

8.00 Call the Midwife, A young woman with Down's syndrome is brought in feeling unwell, and turns out to be six months pregnant. The midwives prepare to celebrate Sister Evangelina's 50th jubilee.

9.00 The British Academy Film Awards, Stephen Fry hosts the ceremony live from the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. Guests include, Captain Phillips, Gravity, Philomena and 12 Years a Slave compete for best film.

11.00 BBC News, Regional News; Weather, 11.25 Film: Doubt, (2008) Drama, starring Meryl Streep, 1.05 Weatherview, 1.10 BBC News.

BBC2

12.30 Live Winter Olympics. Further coverage on day nine in Russia, 4.00 Live Winter Olympics. The concluding coverage on day nine in Russia.

7.00 Winter Olympics: Today at the Games, Jade Baldwin goes high-jumping from day nine in Russia, where five gold medals were decided at venues in Sochi and Krasnaya Polyana.

8.00 Top Gear, Jeremy Clarkson, James May demonstrate their love of small cars with a trip to Ukraine. James Blunt returns for another drive in the Reassembled Ford. Car of the Year, 9.00 Top Gear, An entrepreneur looks for investment for his chocolate drink, a couple try to raise interest in their woolen duvet, and there is a pitch for children's storage device.

10.00 Alan Davies Apres-Ski, The comedian and his guests give their take on the latest from Sochi, (R)

10.30 Line of Duty, The return of the crime drama, with DCI Lindsay Denton comes under suspicion after a police convoy is ambushed.

11.30 Film: The Pursuit of Happyness, (2006) The cast of a 1940s-set movie overreact to rumours of an Oscar nomination. Spoof documentary, directed by and starring Christopher Guest.

12.55 Sign Zone: Countryfile, (R) 1.50 Holby City, (R) 2.50 The Truth About Immigration, (R) 3.50 This Is BBC Two, 5.00 Live Winter Olympics.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Pat & Stan, 6.10 Pat & Stan, (R) 6.20 Pat & Stan, (R) 6.25 Dino Dan, (R) 6.40 Dino Dan, (R) 6.50 Canimals, (R) 7.00 Canimals, (R) 7.05 Canimals, (R) 7.10 Om Om Stories, (R) 7.15 Sooty, (R) 7.30 The Wombles, (R) 7.45 Sooty, 9.30 Murder She Wrote, (R) 10.30 Dickinson's Real Deal, (R) 11.25 ITV News: Weather, 11.35 Inside the National Trust, 12.30 The Crocodile Hunter, (R) 1.00 Live with Alan Titchmarsh, 3.50 Splash!, (R) 5.20 You've Been Framed!, (R) 5.50 Regional Programme, 6.00 ITV News: Weather,

6.15 Dancing on Ice, The six remaining stars battle it out in two rival teams, with the most successful team to have the highest judges' scores doubled. Phillip Schofield and Christine Bleakley present. The results are at 8.30pm.

7.45 All Star Family Fortunes, (2010) TV presenter Julia Bradbury and darts champion Phil Taylor.

8.30 Dancing on Ice: The Skate Off, Two celebrities skate again to impress the judges.

9.00 Selfridge, Delphine helps Hattie do more for the war effort.

10.00 ITV News at Ten, Weather, 10.15 Birds of a Feather, Tracey, Sharon and Doreen lose their jobs, (R)

10.45 FA Cup Highlights, Action from the latest fifth-round fixture.

11.45 Premiership Rugby Union, Highlights of the latest fixtures in English rugby's top-flight competition.

12.45 The Store, 2.45 The Jeremy Kyle Show USA, 4.10 ITV Nightscreen, 5.05 The Jeremy Kyle Show, (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The Hoobs, (R) 6.35 The Hoobs, (R) 7.00 Freeparts on 4, 7.30 Everybody Loves Raymond, (R) 7.55 Fraser, (R) 8.25 The Taste, (R) 9.30 Sunday Brunch, 12.30 The Big Bang Theory, (R) 12.55 The Big Bang Theory, 1.25 How I Met Your Mother, 2.00 The Simpsons, (R) 2.50 The Simpsons, (R) 3.20 Film: Spy Kids 4: All the Time in the World, (2011) 5.00 Deal or No Deal, 6.00 Channel News,

6.30 Film: The Big Picture Travels, (2010) A directionless man tries to prove himself by exploring the Bermuda Triangle, and ends up stuck on an island where he is a giant. He comes across with Jack Black and Emily Blunt, 8.00 Scandinavia, In Norway, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall meets the duo behind novelty song The Fox, joins oil workers on an emergency rescue rehearsal and dives for sea urchins. Last in the series.

9.00 Film: Red, (2010) A retired CIA agent survives an assassination attempt, and realises he must return to find out who wants them dead. Action thriller, starring Bruce Willis.

11.15 Film: Under Siege 2: Dark Territory, (1995) A Navy veteran returns to train battleship hijackers who possess a weapon with the potential to trigger earthquakes. Action adventure, starring Steven Seagal.

1.05 Boss, 2.00 The Secret Millionaire, (2009) My Life, (R) 2.55 Secret Removers, (R) 3.55 Location, Location, Location, (R) 4.50 Supernanny US, (R) 5.30 Deal or No Deal: Love HQ, (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!, Peppa Pig, 6.05 Roary the Racing Car, (R) 6.15 Fifi and the Flowertots, (R) 6.25 Bubble Guppies, (R) 6.40 The Mr Men Show, (R) 6.50 Chloe's Closet, (R) 7.00 Roobarb and Custard Too, (R) 7.10 The Great Pyjama Race, 7.25 Make Way for Noddy, (R) 7.30 Sport and Ernie's Great Adventures, (R) 7.40 City of Friends, (R) 7.55 Little Princess, (R) 8.05 Olly the Little White Van, (R) 8.10 The Big Blue, (R) 8.25 The Bill and His Best Friend Corky, (R) 8.25 Angelina Ballerina, (R) 8.45 Rupert Bear, (R) 9.00 Bear and Holly's Little Kingdom, (R) 9.15 Jelley Jamm, (R) 9.30 The Great Potato Chip Power Rangers Super Megaforce, (R) 10.35 Power Rangers Megaforce, (R) 11.00 Access, (R) 11.05 Ben Fogle: New Lives in the Wild, (R) 12.00 Ice Road Truckers, (R) 12.55 Ice Road Truckers, (R) 1.55 The Hotel Inspector, (R) 2.55 Film: What a Girl Wants, (2003) 5.00 Film: Paul Blart: Mall Cop, (2009) 6.55 5 News,

7.00 Film: The River Wild, (1994) Action thriller, starring Meryl Streep.

9.00 Film: 10,000 BC, (2008) A young mammoth-hunter crosses the wilderness to rescue his lover and fellow villagers from slave raiders. Prehistoric adventure, starring Steven Strait and Camilla Belle.

11.10 Film: The Matrix Reloaded, (2003) Sci-fi thriller sequel, starring Keanu Reeves.

1.40 SuperCasino, 3.10 2000 Nips &_ticks, (R) 4.00 The Train, (R) 4.30 Wilder SOS, (R) 4.25 Make It Big, (R) 4.50 The Funky Valley Show, (R) 5.00 Angels of Jarm, (R) 5.10 Hana's Helpline, (R) 5.20 Angels of Jarm, (R) 5.30 The Funky Valley Show, (R) 5.40 Hana's Helpline, (R)

DIGITAL

7.00 BBC Three, 7.00 BBC Three's Greatest Dance Craze, 7.10 The Voice UK 8.30 The British Academy Film Awards: Red Carpet 9.00 Russell Howard's Good News 10.00 Family Guy 10.45 Uncle 11.15 The American Dad!

BBC Four

7.00 France's Italy, Top to Toe 8.00 The World's Most Beautiful Eggs: The Genius of Carl Faberge 9.00 Bunkers, Brutalism and Bloodymindedness: Concrete Poetry 10.00 Film: Free Men 11.35 Neil Sedaka: King of Song

ITV2

3.40 Film: The Mighty Ducks (1992) 5.50 Film: The Perfect Man (2005) 8.00 You've Been Framed! 9.00 Film: Ocean's Eleven (2001) 11.25 The Big Reunion 2014

ITV3

2.50 Agatha Christie's Marple 5.00 Lewis 7.10 Agatha Christie's Poirot 8.00 Inspector Morse

ITV4

3.20 Film: The Appaloosa (1966) 5.20 Film: Superman II (1980) 8.00 Premium Rugby Union 9.00 Film: Cliffhanger (1993) Action thriller starring Sylvester Stallone, 11.15 Hell on Wheels

E4

3.00 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD 4.00 The Tomorrow People 5.00 Troy 6.00 Brooklyn Nine-Nine 6.30 Big Bang Theory 8.00 Phil Iron Man (2008) 10.25 The Big Bang Theory 10.55 Rude Tube

Film4

3.10 The Love Bug (1968) 5.20 City of Ember (2008) 7.10 Journey to the Center of the Earth (2008) 9.00 The Day the Earth Stood Still (2008) 11.05 Splice (2009)

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What's On!

Film Choices

MONDAY
McBride: It's Murder, Madam, Channel 5, 3.15pm
An aspiring actress thinks she has landed on her feet when she is offered a job straight after arriving in town – but her good fortune proves short-lived when she is accused of murdering her new boss. Luckily, maverick lawyer McBride is happy to help clear her name. Crime drama, starring John Larroquette, Marta DuBois, Matt Lutz and Claire Coffee. (2005)

TUESDAY

Big Momma's House, BBC1, 11.35pm
A dedicated FBI agent will stop at nothing to catch a dangerous escaped convict, even if it means donning a fat suit and drag to pose as the obese old woman who lives across the road from the felon's girlfriend. Comedy, with Martin Lawrence, Nia Long, Paul Giamatti, Jasha Washington and Ella Mitchell. (2001)

WEDNESDAY

Big Momma's House, Channel 4, 12.05am
A dedicated FBI agent will stop at nothing to catch a dangerous escaped convict, even if it means donning a fat suit and drag to pose as the obese old woman who lives across the road from the felon's girlfriend. Comedy, with Martin Lawrence, Nia Long, Paul Giamatti, Jasha Washington and Ella Mitchell. (2001)



The Color of Money, Thursday, BBC1, 11.35pm

THURSDAY

The Color of Money, BBC1, 11.35pm
Fast Eddie Felson takes cocky pool player Vincent under his wing and sets about moulding him into the kind of hustler he used to be. As Vincent gradually immerses himself in the seedy aspects of the game, Eddie begins to discover something of himself in his protégé – and he does not like what he sees. Martin Scorsese's drama sequel to The Hustler, starring an Oscar-winning Paul Newman, with Tom Cruise, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio and John Turturro. (1986)

FRIDAY

Navy Seals, Channel 5, 10pm
The US Navy's elite commando force embarks on a dangerous covert mission to rescue hostages from an Arab terrorist in Beirut. However, the assignment proves far more serious than expected when they realise their enemies have acquired powerful stolen missiles. Action adventure, starring Charlie Sheen, Michael Biehn, Joanne Whalley, Bill Paxton and Rick Rossovich. (1990)

Synecdoche, New York, BBC2, 11.05pm
A neurotic writer builds a replica of New York to use in a play while having a series of affairs. Comedy drama, starring the late Philip Seymour Hoffman with Catherine Keener. (2008)

The stars are out to shine on a night of celebration

The cream of the British movie industry are out in force, along with worldwide talent, to celebrate the best in global cinema at the Bafta Film Awards.

Hot favourite to win a few gongs this year is 12 Years A Slave, up for Best Film, Best Adapted Screenplay (John Ridley), Best Actor (Chiwetel Ejiofor), Best Music (Hans Zimmer), and other gongs including Best Cinematography. However, the likes of American Hustle and Captain Phillips could give Steve McQueen's drama a run for its money.

There's no shortage of quality in the Outstanding British Film section either. Alfonso Cuarón's sci-fi blockbuster Gravity is up against Clio Barnard's award-winner The Selfish Giant, as well as biopics Mandela: Long Walk To Freedom; drama Philomena, which was co-written by Steve Coogan; Ron Howard's James Hunt/Mika Lauda drama Rush; and making-of-Mary-Poppins saga Saving Mr Banks.

The latter was penned by Kelly Marcel, who is one of the names nominated for the Outstanding Debut

Award, along with Colin Carberry and Glenn Patterson, the writers of much-loved music drama Good Vibrations.

There's a strong chance Gravity will romp home with Best Visual Effects, though Star Wars: Episode VII and Star Trek Into Darkness all delivered some eye-popping visuals in 2013; fellow contender The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug was also dazzling – in places. We have no idea who will win what, but we can tell you that Helen Mirren will be picking up the Bafta Fellowship award for her impressive body of work.

As ever there will be a tribute to some of the great film-makers and stars we lost over the past year, including the much-missed Peter O'Toole, Phillip Seymour Hoffman, Mel Smith and James Gandolfini. Host Stephen Fry (one of the best things about the aforementioned Hobbit sequel) will be guiding us through the proceedings from the Royal Opera House in London's Covent Garden.

Even if films aren't your cup of tea, Fry's script is always a treat, while those posh frocks will leave fashionistas rubbing their hands with glee.

Pick of the Week



Stephen Fry hosts The British Academy Film Awards, Sunday, BBC1, 9pm

Best of the Rest

MONDAY
DCI Banks

ITV, 9pm

That DCI Banks doesn't get a minute's peace, does he? If he's not tearing around nailing the local baddies, it's his love life that's in a spin. And things aren't about to settle down for the cop – in either camp – anytime soon. In tonight's episode, investigative journalist Matt Barber is dead found in a holiday chalet in a remote village, and Banks and the team are overwhelmed by the number of leads they seem to have. However, the detective soon discovers a connection between Barber and a mysterious death in the 1980s, revolving around the surviving members of cult rock band The Crystal Kiss. Banks gets a shock when a link between a suspect and Annie reveals secrets from her personal life.

TUESDAY
Live UEFA Champions League

ITV, 7.30pm

Manchester City welcome Spanish champions Barcelona to the Etihad Stadium for this highly anticipated last-16 first-leg contest. This is the first time City have progressed past the group stage of the Champions League, and they would have hoped for an easier tie than this one. Much of their difficulty was due to them finishing second in their group behind holders Bayern Munich and therefore having to play a group winner, although they can take confidence from their outstanding home record, with their recent defeat against Chelsea and a loss to Bayern their only blips in front of their own fans this season.

Sexting Teacher
Channel 4, 10pm

When maths teacher Jeremy Forrest ran away to France with a 15-year-old pupil, he made headlines – and ended up in prison. But this documentary suggests that he was also part of a worrying trend of relationships between teachers and their underage students. While some people who can remember listening to schoolyard gossip may argue this isn't an entirely new phenomenon, the use of social media and smartphones appears to be making it increasingly easy for these relationships to form. By looking at Foster's case, as well as two others which ultimately led to a teacher being convicted (the names in these cases have been changed), the programme looks at what can be done to tackle the problem, and the dangers to the youngsters involved.

WEDNESDAY
Brit Awards 2014

ITV, 8pm

If the Baftas has left you hungry for more high profile London-based back-slapping then you're in for a treat as James Corden returns to host this annual music awards ceremony. Live from the O2 Arena, the 34th event will see a new Brit statue make its debut, while two of the most ubiquitous acts of the night should be electronic London rockers Bastille, and drum and bass quartet Rudimental. Not only are both performing, they are also up for

several gongs, including Best British Group (alongside the Arctic Monkeys, Disclosure and One Direction); British Album of the Year, and British Single of the Year. Other acts taking to the stage are Arctic Monkeys, Katy Perry, Ellie Goulding and Bruno Mars.

Suspects
Channel 5, 10pm

As the improv cops-and-robbers show continues, an assault on Kirk Hawthorne (Robert Boulter), owner of East London's Green Pit nightclub, gives Jack (Damien Molony) and Charlie (Clare Hope-Ashitey)

no end of problems. The victim's sister Ziggy is unconscious in the cellar, with a bleeding head wound. Though Kirk's injury is not serious, Ziggy is suffering from a brain haemorrhage, and also a possible drug overdose. The detectives' investigation is hampered by the lack of the club's security CCTV recorder, which is missing from the premises. However, the death of 19-year-old student Tom Yeoman provides a couple of clues to the case, he's in possession of the same drug Ziggy took. Fay Ripley also stars as big cheese, Di Martha Bellamy.

THURSDAY
Inspector George Gently

BBC1, 8.30pm

Gently and Bacchus investigate a murder carried out by a former serviceman who claims to have been given LSD by scientists. According to the brother of Scott Tanner – the man accused of the killing – he isn't capable of hurting anybody. All the evidence suggests otherwise, but Gently feels he's made a breakthrough when he discovers that Scott had been seeing psychiatrist Dr Lesley after showing signs of schizophrenia. When Lesley is also found murdered, Gently questions his former associate, Dr Jennifer Bing, and what she says makes him wonder if a cover-up is going on. Meanwhile, frustrated at the lack of movement in the case, Mark decides to take matters into his own hands – a move that could prove disastrous for all concerned.

FRIDAY
Live Six Nations Rugby Union

BBC1, 7.55pm

The third round of Six Nations matches gets underway this evening under the lights of the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff, as Wales and France meet in a fixture that could go a long way to deciding the destination of the title. Both nations won on the opening weekend of the season, and another victory here would be a significant step in the quest to finish top of the standings, especially for Wales as they look to win a third successive title. This is a clash which also holds an intriguing sub-plot – many of French rugby's woes have been blamed on the influx of foreign players into the cash-rich Top 14 league, of which Wales have provided several...



Brit Awards 2014, Wednesday, ITV, 8pm

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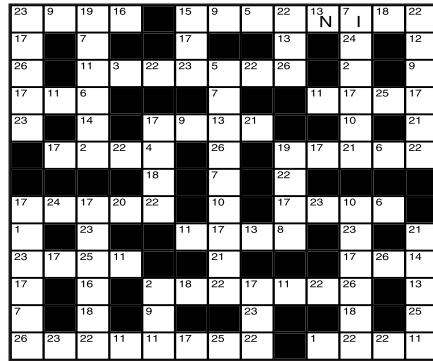
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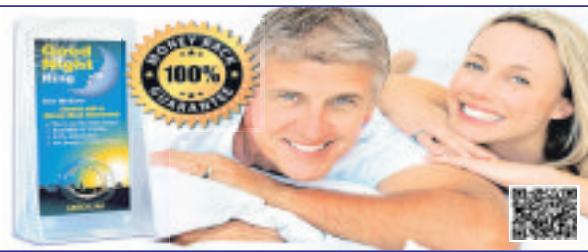
Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
H	Y	D	A	P	E	B	S	N	F	U	Q	O	V	C	T	X	W	Z	M	K	L	J	R	I	G																																																																										



Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

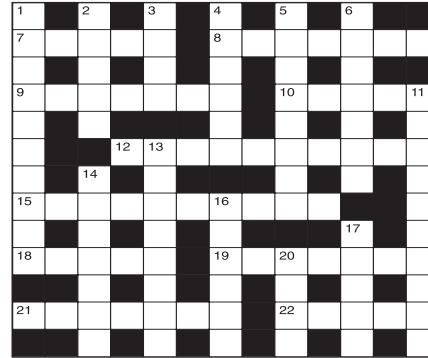
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Where the bride may be seen to reform, we hear (5)
- Disturbing members of the rising generation? (7)
- They may be associated with some reservation (7)
- Shortcoming produced by bad service (5)
- Conifers have to shed leaves before any others (5,2,3)
- Lack of ability showing in volume (10)
- Some of the trade terms make people hold back (5)
- One turn in variety - there's no charge attached to it! (7)
- Everything gone astray without one of the Armada (7)
- Some strange little perfectly-behaved child (5)

Down

- An expert has to look after the controlling genius (6-4)
- Branch of the insect family? (5)
- Deliver without charge (4)
- Where watches are kept close at hand (6)
- Face a hundred on location of military action (8)
- This is made by one who is declining (7)
- How the indulgent one behaves, providing entry to all (10)
- I'm the baggage man for one who buys foreign goods (8)
- Sink a vessel carrying coal (7)
- Stick around at home like a dog (6)
- Uses a tow-line and seems to be a long time in reaching the end (5)
- About a happy state within (4)



Quick Clues:

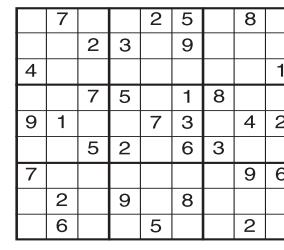
Across

- Ground (5)
- Theme (7)
- Notice (7)
- Narrow to a point (5)
- Loud-voiced (10)
- Arsonist (10)
- Airtless (5)
- Hits (7)
- Abuses (7)
- Sham (5)

Down

- Adornment (10)
- Rub out (5)
- Scorch (4)
- Behind (6)
- Slaughterhouse (8)
- Plunder (7)
- Circus manager (4-6)
- Gently (8)
- Accomplish (7)
- Maintain (6)
- Art (5)
- Prevalent (4)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

1	8	6	3	5	9	2	7	4	1	9	5	8	3	6	4	7	2	5	6	9	4	8	1	3	7	6	1	2	8	5	4	9	3	6	5	2	8	7	4	6	9	5	2	8	1	7	4	3	8	6	5	4	3	2	9	1	5	3	4	7	6	5	6	4	2	7	9	3	1	1	5	3	7	8	6	2	4	9	6	4	2	1	5	7	8	3	4	2	1	6	5	7	9	8	3	4	2	1	6	5
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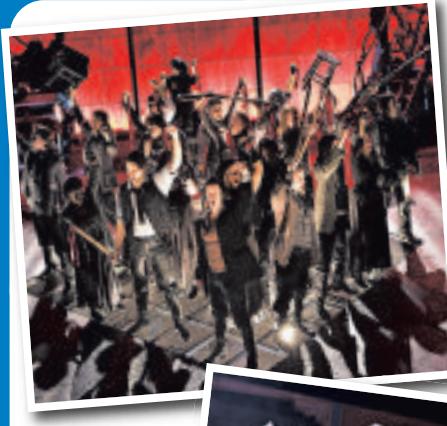
LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Dismale; 8 Rye; 9 Gesticulate; 10 Resin; 12 Adorn; 13 Cheeps; 15 Daffy; 17 Maffin; 18 Haffin; 20 Reinsurance; 22 Ego; 23 Eye-opener. Down: 2 Iro; 3 Alive; 4 Taunts; 5 Emanate; 6 Promonition; 7 Persevere; 10 Siege of Troy; 11 Pack-mules; 14 Passage; 16 Chaste; 19 Strip; 21 Cue. QUICK - Across: 1 Paralysis; 8 Own; 9 Crestfallen; 11 Dresser; 12 Alien; 13 Return; 15 Receded; 17 Class; 18 Average; 20 Silliness; 22 Elegance. Down: 2 Ains; 3 Lotus; 4 Stars; 5 Salvage; 6 Considerate; 7 Insincere; 10 Eventuality; 11 Direction; 14 Rosette; 16 Pallid; 19 Exile; 21 Nil.

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Property

Six bedrooomed house has delightful features



AN impressive three storey six bedrooomed semi-detached residence in Heath Lane, West Bromwich is in an ideal location for commuter routes.

It is for sale through Bartrams at £299,950.

It has a porch, reception hallway, dining room, lounge, kitchen, utility, downstairs bathroom, conservatory, six bedrooms, a bathroom, WC, guest bathroom, majority double glazing, central heating, a large rear garden, a paved driveway and a rear garage.

The hall has two side windows, (one being a port hole window) and a Victorian tiled floor. Reception room one has a gas fire with a marble surround and a port hole window. Reception room two has a gas fireplace with a wooden surround. The conservatory has a tiled floor, while the kitchen has tiled flooring and a walk-in pantry. For further information contact Bartrams on 0121 6019370 or visit www.bartrams.com



Dining kitchen is a feature of home



AN ATTRACTIVE and beautifully presented, extended three bedrooomed detached home of considerable style and quality, 9 Richmond Road, Sedgley, is in a delightful location in a popular area. It is for sale through Roden Boydell at £214,950.

With gas central heating and double glazing it has a porch, reception hall, lounge, a magnificent dining kitchen, a sitting room, downstairs WC, three bedrooms, a bathroom, loft conversion with windows and a pleasant rear garden, front garden and a block paved driveway. The lounge has an attractive fireplace with a gas fire and a laminate floor.

For further information contact Roden Boydell on 01902 881188 or visit the www.rodenboydell.com website.



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Cavendish House, 359-361 Hagley Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B17 8DL

Much improved and attractive terraced house



A MUCH-IMPROVED and beautifully presented traditional mid terrace home in Swindon Road, Edgbaston, includes a modern kitchen and a superb bathroom.

An ideal first time purchase, it is for sale through Robert Oulsnam at £124,950.

It has an entrance vestibule, through lounge/dining room with wood effect flooring, inner hallway with under-stairs storage, attractive kitchen with an oven and extractor fan, two double bedrooms, bathroom and gardens. Contact Robert Oulsnam on 01272 871395 or visit www.oulsnam.net



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HALESOWEN, Lusbridge close £1,000 pcm - Fees
An unfurnished detached house, in a very quiet cul-de-sac location. Briefly featuring 4 double bedrooms, master with en-suite, family bathroom with shower, large lounge, large fitted kitchen, conservatory, downstairs wc, gas central heating, double glazing, rear garden, garage and driveway parking. EPC: E



NEW

HALESOWEN, Century Way £750 pcm - Fees
A stunning end terrace townhouse on a new build estate. This 4 bedroomed property consists of a spacious lounge, dining room, kitchen, utility room, cloakroom, master, guest WC, master bedroom with ensuite, family bathroom with shower, small rear garden, garage and driveway parking. EPC: C



NEW

HALESOWEN, Welbeck Close £675 pcm - Fees
A beautifully presented detached bungalow set in a Cul-de-sac location. This lovely property features 2 double bedrooms, large fitted kitchen, lounge with patio doors leading into a spacious garden, bathroom with shower, gas central heating and double glazing. EPC: C



CRADLEY HEATH, Newland Gardens £650 pcm - Fees
Spacious well situated link-detached bungalow in cul de sac position. Large lounge, fitted kitchen opening into superb proportioned sun-lit conservatory overlooking private rear garden. 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, garage & driveway, gas central heating/double glazed. Unfurnished or furnished to suit. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Holt Road £625 pcm - Fees
Immaculately presented mid terraced property in a convenient location for shops, buses and motorway links. This property features a large lounge, dining room, luxury refitted shower room, 2 double bedrooms, and 2 single bedrooms, gas central heating, double glazing, small rear court yard garden, on road parking. EPC: D



NEW

HALESOWEN, Middlefield Gardens £595 pcm - Fees
First floor apartment in Hurst Green. Set within well maintained gardens, this apartment features a large lounge, 2 double bedrooms, a single bedroom, fitted kitchen with appliances, house bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, parking area and communal gardens. Available now. EPC: C



CRADLEY HEATH, Castle Close £595 pcm - Fees
A newly modernised unfurnished semi detached house in a sought after location briefly featuring 3 bedrooms, brand new fitted dining kitchen, brand new bathroom with shower. Benefits also include garage and driveway parking, rear garden. Cul-de-sac location. EPC: D



ROWLEY REGIS, Highbury Avenue £575 pcm - Fees
A 3 bed mid terrace in a sought after location. This lovely property has been re-decorated and has off road parking. It is also suitable for the first time buyer, accessible rooms and features 3 bedrooms, 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, bathroom with shower, double glazing, gas central heating. EPC: TBC



NEW

NETHERTON, Purlin Wharf £550 pcm - Fees
A very presentable, unfurnished 1st floor apartment on this popular development, overlooking the canal. Featuring 2 double bedrooms, a single, fitted kitchen with integrated oven, 2 reception rooms, family bathroom, separate shower, double glazing, parking area and 1 allocated parking space. Viewing highly recommended. EPC: B



HALESOWEN, Olive Lane £550 pcm - Fees
An unfurnished 2 bed semi detached home, close to Blackheath Town Centre. Benefiting from double glazing and central heating and comprising of 2 reception rooms, modern fitted kitchen, utility room, downstairs bathroom with shower, 2 double bedrooms, converted attic room, garage and long mature garden. EPC: F



HALESOWEN, Malt Mill Lane £530 pcm - Fees
A superb fully refurbished traditional terraced house. Within easy reach of Blackheath and a short drive from Halesowen and the M5. The home features 2 large reception rooms, modern fitted kitchen, downstairs bathroom with shower, 2 double bedrooms, converted attic room, garage and long mature garden. EPC: F



NEW

STOURBRIDGE, Scotts Road £525 pcm - Fees
This fully refurbished semi-detached house is a superb opportunity for the 1st time renter. Offering 2 generously proportioned bedrooms, spacious lounge, brand new kitchen and bathroom with shower, garage, ample off-road parking. It is particularly well situated for access to public transport links and town centre amenities. EPC: E



NEW

QUINTON, Lapal Manor Court £525 pcm - Fees
An unfurnished ground floor apartment briefly comprising: living room/fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower. Benefits include gas central heating, secure allocated parking. Ideal location for motorway access. Additional fees will apply. EPC: B



NEW

HALESOWEN, Hawne Court £525 pcm - Fees
Located in a quiet, desirable neighbourhood is this well kept ground floor apartment situated at the end of a peaceful cul-de-sac, offering a spacious living room, modern fitted kitchen with built in appliances, 2 double bedrooms, gas central heating, bathroom with fitted shower, allocated parking space with garage. EPC: D



NEW

HALESOWEN, Upper Ashley Street £525 pcm - Fees
Set in this quiet residential area close to Blackheath Town Centre is this lovely modern mid-terraced home featuring lounge, double fitted kitchen with gas oven/hob, 1 double & 1 large single bedroom, shower room, gas central heating, rear garden and parking for 2 cars, unfurnished. EPC: TBC



NEW

HALESOWEN, Peckingham Street £525 pcm - Fees
Wonderfully refurbished with original features maintained and fantastic convenience centre of town. Ring us now to view this lovely light, airy apartment, modern kitchen with new appliances and useful utility room. With 2 double bedrooms, this is a must see exceptional apartment. EPC: TBC



NEW

CRADLEY HEATH, Court Street £495 pcm - Fees
A 2 bedroom traditional terraced property in the centre of Old Hill which features 2 double bedrooms, 2 reception rooms, 1 dining/study room, modern fitted kitchen and downstairs bathroom with shower and separate toilet. Gas central heating. Walking distance to rail/bus links. EPC: E



NEW

HALESOWEN, Banners Street £495 pcm - Fees
A mid terrace property which has been refurbished comprises of 2 double bedrooms, brand new fitted kitchen, 2 reception rooms, white bathroom suite with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, large tiered garden with decking area, on road parking. EPC: E



NEW

CRADLEY HEATH, Copice Road £485 pcm - Fees
A 2 bedroom semi-detached house recently fully refurbished on the Timberestate. This house comprises of a front reception room, spacious rear lounge, fitted kitchen, house bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, front and rear gardens, on road parking. EPC: C



NEW

HALESOWEN, Masefield Rise £450 pcm - Fees
An unfurnished ground floor flat, in a well sought after location. A short walk from Halesowen and on a major bus route, this apartment features 1 double bedroom, fitted kitchen, lounge, bathroom with shower, double glazing, front and rear gardens, on road parking. EPC: D



NEW

CRADLEY HEATH, Victoria Gardens £435 pcm - Fees
A fantastic 1 bedroom 1st floor apartment which has just been fully refurbished to a high standard. Large dual aspect lounge, fully fitted kitchen with appliances, bathroom with shower, electric heating, garage en-block, rear garden, allocated parking. This property is ready to go! EPC: C

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£144,950

A traditional detached property comprising two reception rooms, kitchen, side lobby with brick store, WC and three bedrooms.

EPC E

Public Notice



£85,000

28 CENTRAL AVENUE, ROWLEY REGIS, B65 8BA. We are acting in the sale of the above property and have received an offer of £86,500. Any interested parties must submit any higher offers in writing to the selling agents before an exchange of contracts takes place.

EPC D

Public Notice



£85,000

3 CLEMENT ROAD, HALESOWEN, B62 9LR. We are acting in the sale of the above property and have received an offer of £80,000. Any interested parties must submit any higher offers in writing to the selling agent before an exchange of contracts takes place.

EPC D

Green Lane, Halesowen



£85,000

This traditional mid terraced property offers the following accommodation lounge, second reception room, kitchen, family bathroom and three bedrooms.

Awaiting EPC

Old Park Road, Dudley



Offers Over £80,000

Semi detached three bedroom property comprising entrance hall, lounge, kitchen/diner, bathroom, front and rear gardens and driveway.

EPC E

Great Bridge Road, Bilston



Offers Over £75,000

Semi detached three bedroom property briefly comprising entrance hall, lounge/diner, kitchen, utility, bathroom, front and rear gardens and driveway.

EPC F

Gammage Street, Dudley



Offers Over £70,000

End terraced two bedroom property briefly comprising entrance hall, dining room, lounge, kitchen, bathroom and rear garden.

EPC F

Queens Cross, Dudley



Offers Over £70,000

Two bedroom terraced property including lounge, kitchen/diner, two room cellar, upstairs bathroom and off road parking.

EPC C

Southgate Way, Dudley



Offers Over £70,000

Well presented first floor two bedroom apartment briefly comprising entrance hall, lounge/kitchen, bathroom and allocated parking.

EPC C

Dudley Road, Dudley



Offers Over £70,000

First floor two bedroom flat briefly comprising communal entrance, entrance hall, lounge, kitchen, bathroom, rear garden and communal parking.

EPC C

Rugeley Close, Tipton



Offers Over £65,000

One bedroom apartment briefly comprising communal entrance, entrance hall, lounge, kitchen, bathroom and allocated parking.

EPC B

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Mirage: seeing is believing

By Andy Enright

Mitsubishi tends to do small cars rather well. Not that you'd know, because they don't always get the marketing push they deserve in this country.

The old Mitsubishi Colt was a really good fun supermini that spawned the Smart Forfour. One of those cars that was somewhat overlooked by the masses falling over themselves to get into Corsas and Fiestas, the Colt now makes a great used buy.

Mitsubishi have gone back to the drawing board with their latest supermini, the Mirage, and has come up with a vehicle that really chimes with the economic times. If you want to keep

You don't have to spend too long looking at the engineering of the Mirage to

realise that it's been developed down to a price, with cost of running as a priority. Therefore it's not really fair to expect it to be a pin-sharp driver's car.

You get the choice of two engines, both petrol-powered. The entry-level powerplant is a 70bhp 1.0-litre unit, which is mated to a five-speed manual gearbox.

Pay a bit more and you can choose a 79bhp 1.2-litre manual car with the option of a CVT automatic gearbox that really takes the drag out of city driving. This engine is quite perky, getting to 60mph in 11.7 seconds and running onto 112mph.

The steering is geared for ease of use at low speeds, which makes parking very easy at the detriment of high-speed precision.

The Mitsubishi Mirage looks quite smart, if a little unadventurously styled. It's neat and a little bulbous, in much the same way



.....

You don't have to spend too long looking at the engineering to realise that it's been developed down to a price.

that most superminis looked five years ago, without the big signature design flourishes of the latest generation of cars. But then if you wanted something like a Renault Clio, you'd probably be paying around quite a bit more.

There are some nice details though. I particularly liked the deep side sculpting, the very cleanly-styled rear end and the slotted front grille. Drop inside and it feels fairly basic, although if you can specify the piano black dash treatment, that lifts the ambience a little. There are quite a few hard plastic finishes on display although

it's excusable given that the 1.0-litre model weighs just 845kg. With prices starting from around £8,000, the Mitsubishi Mirage is campaigning in a market populated not by the Fiestas, Polos and Crios.

It looks good, the fuel economy and emissions figures are excellent, it's very keenly priced, you just know it's going to be metronomically reliable. We don't know whether this one is going to do any better than its Colt predecessor, but if you want something a little different and your new car budget isn't stretching too far, you might find a lot to like here.



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Drivetime

New showroom opens doors

By David Banner

New 'Blue Oval' signage is in place and Startin of Stourbridge's impressive new Ford showroom is open for business having opened its doors on Thursday, January 2.

This dealership celebrates its official opening mid February but the Ford sales, aftersales, service and Ford parts departments are all fully operational now. The sales department is managed by Simon Dennison, who has extensive knowledge of the Ford brand and its many products.

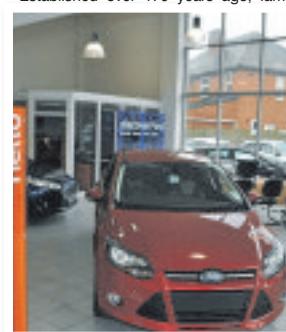
Sales executive, Alison Byers, also kows Ford well. She's the Ford accredited Motability specialist able to provide for the motoring needs of all Motability car customers.

Established over 170 years ago, fam-

ily-owned Startin of Stourbridge bought Showells in June 2013 with the intention of adding the Ford brand to its portfolio. The new Ford dealership runs alongside the successful and established Hyundai franchise. So with two of the UK's most popular motoring brands at one location, one can imagine that customer interest is great and that footfall within the showrooms is high.

Work is now under way to construct a brand new Ford Retail Look and Style showroom, the design of which follows standards set by Ford. The facilities for both customers and staff to use are extremely impressive and very hi-tech. WiFi and iPads are readily available so that customers can check out the many options offered by Ford when configuring the specification of their new Ford vehicles whilst customers relax on supremely comfortable seating.

Combining these facilities with the



'Ford has long been recognised as Britain's biggest-selling motor brand with a huge and enthusiastic following.'

friendly and attentive customer care offered by the sales team will make a visit to Startin of Stourbridge's new Ford showroom a very pleasant experience indeed. It'll be a great environment in which to discuss your next car purchase.

Ford has long been recognised as Britain's biggest-selling motor brand with a huge and enthusiastic following. Inside this showroom you'll find Ford's award-winning range of stylish models.

The range includes many of Britain's most popular cars such as KA, New Fiesta, New B-Max, Focus, C-Max,

Mondeo, S-Max, Galaxy and the all New Kuga crossover. These stylish cars not only top the sales charts but lead the way in all their respective classes.

In addition to new Ford sales, Startin Ford and other pre-owned cars. So, for friendly advice and a warm welcome, visit Startin of Stourbridge Ford, 82 Stourbridge Road, Stourbridge DY9 7DE. Call 01384 849176.

Pictured above are Dealer principal Mark Whale, Ford sales executive Alison Byers and Ford sales manager Simon Dennison.

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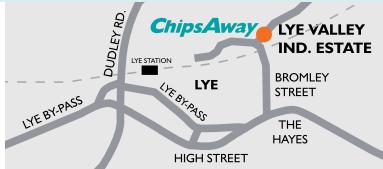


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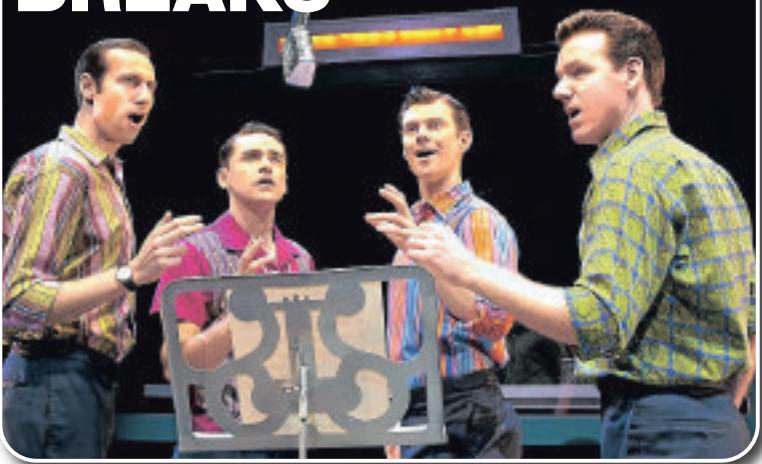
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The Borough Council of Sandwell
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(Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting) Order 2014

The Borough Council of Sandwell in exercise of its powers under Sections 1, 2, 45 and 46 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and of all other enabling powers and after consulting with the Chief Officer of Police in accordance with paragraph 20 of Schedule 9 to the said Act of 1984, proposes to make an Order which will introduce the following:

1. No Waiting At Any Time* restriction in parts of Primrose Close, Cradley Heath.

2. Increase the length of 'No Waiting At Any Time' in parts(s) of New Pool Road, Cradley Heath.

3. Limited Waiting Monday to Saturday 8am to 6pm 1 hour No Return Within 2 hours' in parts of New Pool Road, Cradley Heath.

A copy of the draft Order, statement of reasons for making the Order and a map showing the roads affected may be examined at the offices of the Area Director of Street Scene, Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 3DE between the hours of 8am - 5.30pm on Mondays to Thursdays and 8am - 5pm on Fridays. A plan is also available to view on the council's website.

Any person wishing to make an objection or representation to the proposed Order must do so by writing stating the grounds of their objection to Mr Irfan Choudry, Service Manager - Highways, Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, West Midlands B69 3DE or by email to highways@sandwell.gov.uk no later than the 6th March 2014.

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Spencer is eager to get back in the ring

KINGSWINFORD'S Kyle Spencer is hoping to make up for lost time by hitting the ground running in his first fight for 10 months.

The undefeated light middleweight has six victories but boxed just once last year, so is hoping his run-out on Saturday March 1 at Walsall Town Hall is the first of many in 2014.

'The Style' has seen a host of contests fall by the wayside still early on in his professional career and admitted it's been hard to handle.

The 23-year-old is desperate to get back into the ring and will face Exeter's Faheem Khan, a former Masters Bronze title challenger.

He said: "It has been a difficult few months. I thought that it was going to be a good year for me. I was supposed to be out again last July, but that never happened. I was on a show in September, which I trained for but it got cancelled."

Tickets at £30 and £60 ringside, are available from the Town Hall Box Office on 0845 111 2900. The after-show party is at the Pitch Sports Bar Walsall.

Team will plug gap, Chambers

ADAM CHAMBERS says Walsall have the strength in depth to cope without influential skipper Andy Butler in this Friday's showdown with play-off rivals Peterborough United.

The centre-back is set to miss the trip to London Road through suspension – the first time he will not start a game for the Saddlers this term.

Butler's partnership with Paul Downing has been a key component in one of League One's meanest defences and he is a big miss for a game being billed as a play-off six pointer.

Ben Purkiss and James Chambers are the two prime candidates to replace the skipper and midfielder Adam says whoever is chosen will be good enough.

"We have dealt with it before," he said. "I'm sure whoever comes in will do a good job. It does help if you can keep a settled partnership at the back but these things happen to every team."

Strategy change pays off for firsts

OHHC 1sts 3 Kings Heath 0
OLD Halesians Hockey Club had a frustrating afternoon, despite easing to a 3-0 win and taking all three points from league strugglers Kings Heath.

On a cold, Saturday, it was always going to be a tough match when they were reduced to 11 players prior to pushback.

This was due to illness and injury and OHHC had to ring the changes due to the circumstances.

Old Hales adjusted their formation due to this, and despite this change they were unable to take control early on in the game.

Kings Heath went for broke, and threw players forward to look for the early goal but they were kept at bay by Old Hales.

Hales were frustrated by the Kings Heath attack, and chances were few and far between for both teams throughout the match.

Old Hales recognised they were struggling to break down Kings Heath, and reverted to their preferred formation despite the lack of personnel being a problem.

This strategy soon paid off, with chances then falling to Graham Knight.

Man-of-the-match, Knight first

found the crossbar, when his diving shot looped over the visiting goalkeeper to frustrate the shooter.

The striker, who had been suffering a goal-drought in recent weeks, soon broke this when he opened the scoring for the home side.

Hales went into the break just 1-0 up, and were frustrated by the lack of goals during the half.

The hosts started the second half much more relaxed and con-

fident, as they started to put more pressure on the Kings Heath defence. Chales Palmer doubled the home side's lead, before Tom Bulteel found the scoresheet when he fired past helpless Kings Heath goalkeeper.

Both teams tired, due to the lack of subs, but Hales' Simon Palmer had arrived to bolster the squad and allow players to take a break.

It was a scrappy game, and Old Halesians just held out for the remainder of the game, knowing that they had gained three points from a frustrating and challenging situation, despite knowing that

they put 10 goals passed the opponents in the reverse fixture before Christmas.

Hales will reinforce their squad this week, and look for another win, as they travel to Stone HC, who are much improved since the mid-season winter break, having lost only one of their games.

Other Results:
OHHC Ladies 1sts 2 Worcester 1
Streetly 0 OHHC 2nds 4
OHHC 3rds 2 Olton & WW 7
Birmingham University 8 OHHC
4ths 0
OHHC 5ths 4 Khalsa 1

Pedmore keep their unbeaten run going

PEDMORE (127-3) beat Envile B 66-3 by 61 runs

Pedmore continued their unbeaten run although the early loss of Dave Skelding posed a temporary question mark.

Dan Jones (25no) and Sam Perruza (29) took advantage of some friendly bowling and 'experimental' field placings that belied the accuracy and penetration of their bowlers.

On the retirements of Jones and Perruza the runfest continued with John Hurdman (23) and James Burgoine (21) helping Pedmore to a challenging target. Envile B fell quickly behind thanks to the more accurate Pedmore bowling, Dave Skelding taking 1-8 in his three overs. Envile B were second best on this occasion and may have to review some tactics.

Lye (102-5) beat Hagley (99-5) by 3 runs

A close encounter between these newcomers finished with Lye taking the cigar. Lye batting lost two early wickets but Imran Riaz (27no) got the innings moving and Aamir Manzoor (25) struck the ball well taking Lye's score into three figures.

Ismail is poised to stay put

ZELI ISMAIL was today set to stay at Burton Albion for the rest of the season with a challenge from Wolves boss Kenny Jackett to gatecrash the Molineux first team.

The 20-year-old winger has wowed Brewers fans in his initial one-month stay at the Pirelli Stadium, signing off with a superb winner in the League Two clash at Morecambe on Saturday.

Burton boss Gary Rowett said: "He's had a huge effect. He's set three goals up in four games so far and scored one to win a game." Now Jackett is happy to let Ismail stay longer to learn his trade.

"He's made a big impact for them," said Jackett. "I'm looking for him to hold down a starting place at Burton from now to the end of the season - that's his challenge."

He's done very well in our youth team and under-21s, he added.

DK made to pay for mistakes in defence

Harrogate 38 DK 7

THE DK team travelled north to Harrogate with an air of enthusiasm, perhaps fuelled by the anticipation of a stopover in the night spots of Leeds.

This enthusiasm was quickly evident from the kick off and DK should have taken the lead within the first few minutes.

The hosts were quickly pe-

pared for a high tackle.

Gareth Bown drilled the ball deep into Harrogate

territory and from the re-

sulting line out, possession

was secured and the ball fed to the backs.

Kieron Pinches made an

instant break and decided

to go for the try line only

to be brought down inches

short when the better op-

portunity would have been to

pass to a two man overlap.

The hosts managed to clear

their lines.

Kieron Pinches made an

instant break and decided

to go for the try line only

to be brought down inches

short when the better op-

portunity would have been to

pass to a two man overlap.

The hosts managed to clear

their lines.

DK started the second

half exerting pressure on

the hosts only to be let down

by some indifferent tackling.

In the 45th minute when

Harrogate's centre Luke

Edwards took advantage of

poor defence to score. Rown-

tree converted.

In the 69th minute and

totally against the run of

play they Danny Matthews

got the final score.



John Tideswell in full flight for DK at Harrogate a game they eventually lost even after putting up a good fight

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SPORT

Sports Desk 01902 319531

Saxons keep up run with shutout

STOURBRIDGE Saxons 14 Chester 0

A STRONG wind and soft surface put running rugby at a premium at Stourton Park on Saturday.

Excellent Saxons' defensive commitment and discipline were key to victory, but a dogged Chester proved difficult to break down.

Though they took a 14-0 lead into the interval the Saxons were denied several second half scoring opportunities in controversial circumstances.

The Saxons quickly worked an attacking platform when Pete White's neat chip enabled his pursuing team mates to bundle a defender into touch. Ben Hughes' lineout take set up a driving maul that Chester were unable to repel, prop Mike Hill bagging his first try in Saxons' colours.

The visitors conceded penalties that were kicked into the 22, Robbie Hurrell's lineout catch set up another driving maul but this time Chester were able to hold it out.

For the Saxons the ball was worked into space where it found loose head Mark George who barged his way over from short range, Hearn again adding the extras. Early in the second half the Saxons caught their opponents unaware with a long Robinson cut-out pass that put Tom Jarvis through.

Saddlers in mourning

WALSALL are mourning the loss of former player Eddie Holding, who has died aged 83.

Holding made 41 appearances for the Saddlers in two spells during the early 1950s, scoring eight goals.

Joining the club as an amateur in 1947, Wolverhampton-born Holding turned professional in January 1949 and made his debut during the following season.

Establishing himself in the team during the 1951/52 campaign, he made 25 appearances, mainly in the right-back role.

Also able to play in attack when required, he scored a hat-trick against Brighton on Christmas Day 1953, during what was his second spell with the club having briefly moved to Derby County.

His next port of call was Barrow, who he joined in the summer of 1954.

Triple turn

Boxer Whittaker rings up three wins

Page 39

DK made to pay

Mistakes in defence prove side's downfall

Page 39



email: Chronsport@expressandstar.co.uk

Battling Villa denied win by the Marshall

Cardiff 0 Villa 0

IN a congested table where eight points separate the bottom half every point is precious and it would have felt like two dropped for both sides.

Cardiff dominated the first half- hitting the woodwork through Fraizer Campbell and Craig Noone – while Villa's Fabian Delph and Andi Weimann were denied by two wonderful David Marshall saves.

Skipper Ron Vlaar's return was desperately needed. Villa are yet to win without their leader – losing five and drawing one – as they increasingly rely on his presence. Villa's failure to buy defensive reinforce-

Football

ments in January – although Jores Okore is due back next month – could have spectacularly backfired.

But with the forthcoming break Vlaar could be risked. It paid off as he was a rock at the back to give Villa a platform to secure their sixth clean sheet of the season.

He and the claret and blues grew into the game and when Cardiff did wriggle free Brad Guzan and the woodwork denied them.

Vlaar calmed the side as Ciaran Clark

paid the price for a poor display against the Hammers and dropped to the bench.

Weimann was replaced by Marc Albrighton while Matt Lowton was left out completely. Joe Bennett made his first Premier League start since the final day of last season as an auxiliary winger designed to help blunt the dangerous Noone.

The visitors survived a double scare on 14 minutes. First, Campbell's effort was touched onto the post by Guzan and then Noone's follow-up deflected off Ashley Westwood and hit the bar. There was more purpose to the hosts, Noone and Wilfried Zaha the driving forces with Zaha seeing a

'goal' rightly ruled out for offside. In contrast the claret and blues were anaemic. That changed after the break as Cardiff ran out of steam and Villa grew into the game.

Villa sensed a chance and Leandro Bacuna wasted their first opening when he shot wide. Marshall produced his first fine save of the night, turning Delph's deflected strike wide.

Villa should have scored but, having been set clear by Christian Benteke's cute flick, Gabby Agbonlahor hesitated with just Marshall to beat and shot wide. They could have won it in added-time but Weimann was denied by Marshall's brilliant save.

Point at Cardiff 'massive'

BOSS Paul Lambert hailed Villa's 'huge point' against Cardiff.

The claret and blues claimed a point in Tuesday night's 0-0 draw and will now head to Portugal for a training camp.

The draw kept Villa four points above the Premier League relegation zone in 11th place and Lambert insisted it could be a key result.

He said: "We've picked up 17 points away from home which in this league is an incredible stat to do that."

"It's another point and it could be a huge one for us. With so many games still to play there will be a lot of back and forth with a lot of teams."

"The thing with us is we're a threat. We can score. We've got lads who can score and you saw that against Cardiff. We had chances to win the game and we should have won it.

"But you keep going, you keep looking to try and win the next game. Listen, you don't know."

"We were in a hell of a position last year we were well down there and we've managed to get out of it, so you keep going, you don't judge anything until it's finished."

Bobsled athlete given bursary

A bobsledder from Willenhall is one of five sporting students to receive a Leeds Metropolitan University scholarship to honour one of athletics' best-known coaches.

Ryan Farrington, aged 24, who is also a sprinter and is studying for an MA in Osteopathy at Leeds Met, has been awarded the £500 Wilf Paish Athletics Scholarship.

The Chronicle, a Midland News Association Ltd publication, printed by the company at Ketley, Telford. Thursday, February 13.

MEL'S MEN HAVE THE LAST LAUGH

Albion 1 Chelsea 1

PEPE Mel may still be awaiting his first victory, but he'll be a lot more confident about its imminent arrival after a rousing fightback as bottom end Albion faced top chasers Chelsea.

A late, equalising goal by substitute Victor Anichebe cancelled out Branislav Ivanovic's strike on the stroke of half-time – it was no more than the Baggies deserved.

In the context of the moment – his faltering team's slither into the bottom three and Chelsea's swaggering arrival at the summit – this was Albion's best performance under the Spanish coach on whom so much has been gambled.

Searching

They came into this game searching for a reason to believe as much as a reward from opponents in such ripe form and to get both made for a handsome night's work indeed.

It edged Albion out of the bottom three for at least 24 hours and injected into the camp much-needed confidence that the next two assignments can be a springboard to safety.

They handled this challenge about as well as could have been expected. Chelsea were the dominant force for the first hour but there was pragmatism in Albion's resistance which restricted the visitors' scoring chances

Football

and ensured they were never able to kill off the game with a second goal.

Mel had opted to take on Mourinho's team with a youthful combination up front as Saido Berahino was joined by Thierry Bifouma. The pair combined for Albion's one and only opportunity in that opening half, which Thierry was not quite sharp enough to take.

That the Palace shocker had triggered a reaction from Albion was clear. Their tackling and defending carried much more 'devil', but from Chelsea's final corner, David Luiz gained a vital touch to Willian's centre which found Ivanovic sneaking in behind Gareth McAuley to strike.

A flurry of chances around the 75th-minute mark saw James Morrison, Thierry and Chris Brunt all threaten but their reward arrived in the 86th minute when Anichebe headed home Berahino's cross.

That it came from the position where Gary Cahill would have been had he not been limping out of the game while Mourinho dithered over a replacement left the visitors accused of complacency. But Albion won't worry about that.



Albion's Victor Anichebe celebrates his equaliser against Premiership rivals Chelsea at the Hawthorns on Tuesday night. The Baggies came back from 1-0 down to share the points

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